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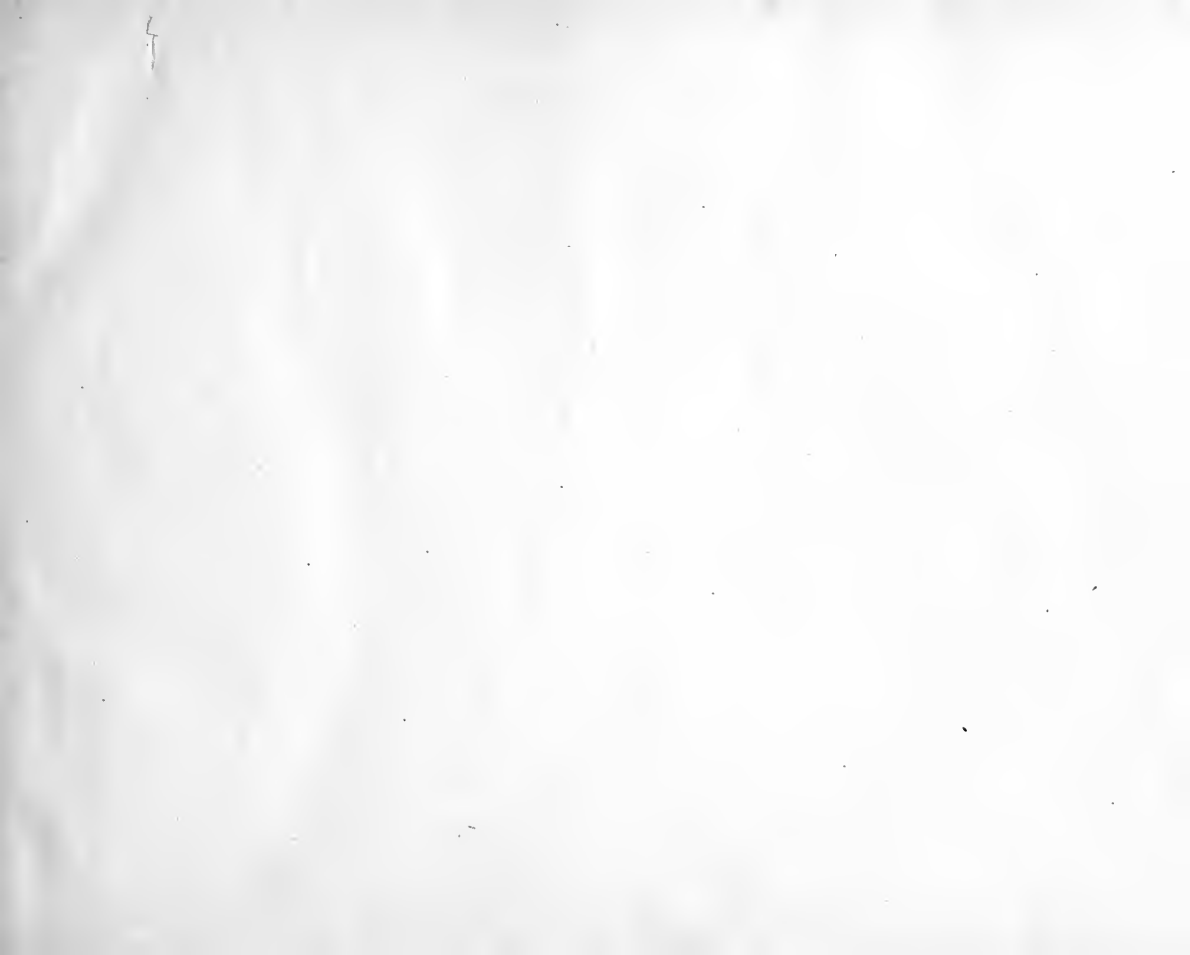


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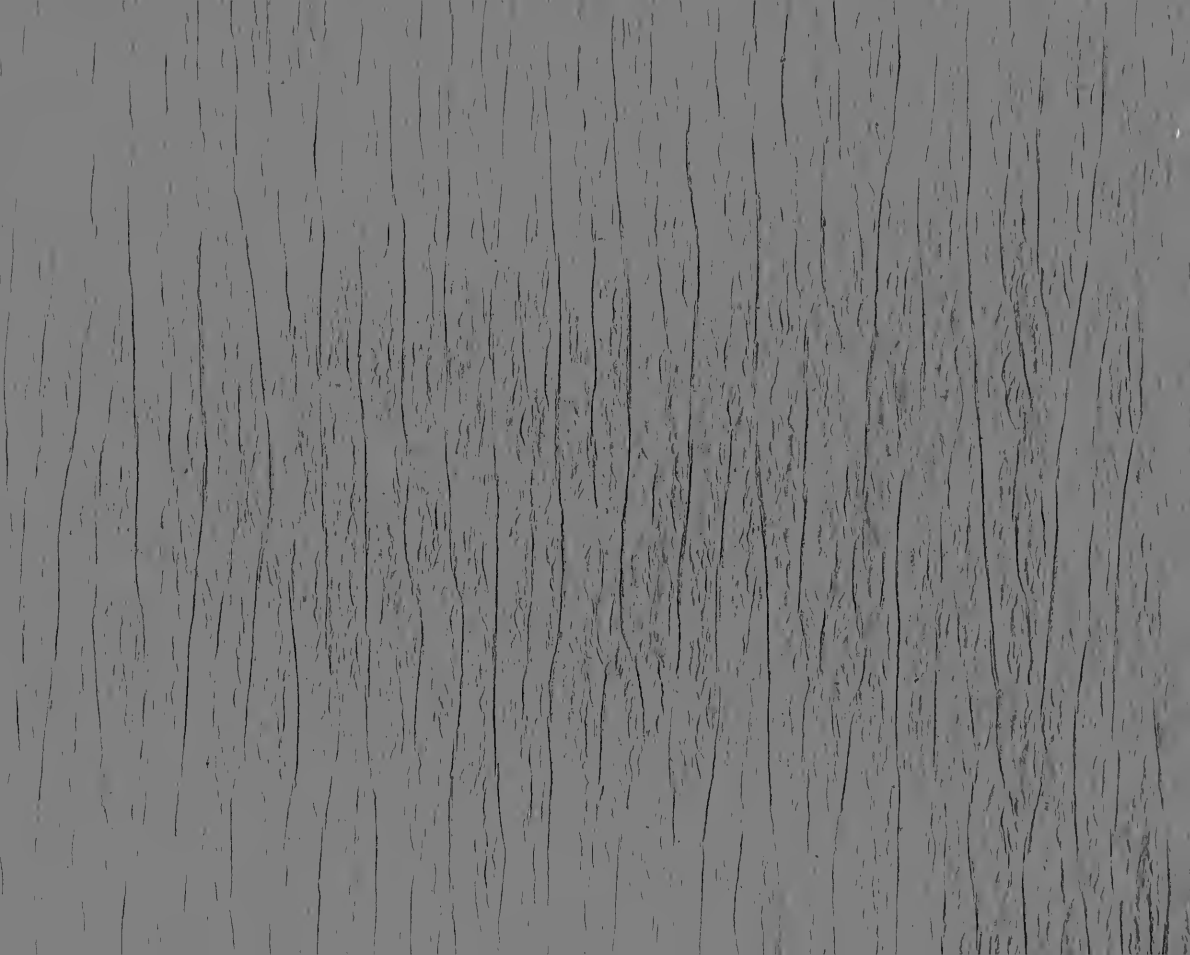
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MEXICAN NATIONAL FLAG

A Sketch

Of the State of

Chiapas, Mexico

By

W. W. Byam

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TO THE
HONORABLE EMILIO RABASA,
ILLUSTRIOUS AS CITIZEN, GOVERNOR, SENATOR
AND STATESMAN,
THIS BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS STATE IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR

PREFACE



HAT is offered the reader in the following pages has been, in large measure, drawn from the Author's observations and travels in Mexico during the past two years. These travels, in which the Republic has been three times crossed from ocean to ocean, have extended from the northern boundary on the Rio Grande to the confines of the Republic of Guatemala on the south; and has covered to a greater or less extent twenty-one of the twenty-seven Mexican States.

The accompanying illustrations are from photographs taken under the personal supervision of the Author and from views kindly furnished by the Hon. Emilio Rabasa, present Senator representing the state of Chiapas in the Mexican National Congress. These photographic reproductions will give the reader a better conception of the actual appearance and character of the country than is possible to convey by any written description.

Among other sources of authentic information consulted in the preparation of this brief sketch of Chiapas, and the one most drawn upon, has been the well digested state compilation of Don Ramon Rabasa entitled "El Estado de Chiapas Geografia y Estadistica." To this valuable work and its able compiler is to be credited much of the general data and statistical tables herein contained.

From many years experience in surveys of the public domain on the frontier of our Western States, the Author believes himself a competent judge of soil, climate and the other essentials necessary to a desirable country and therefore does not hesitate to give expression to his opinion upon that subject.

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CHAC-MOOL

AN ANCIENT MAYAN DEITY

THIS FIGURE IS LIFE SIZE AND IS CUT FROM A SINGLE BLOCK OF STONE



Intro- ductory

NOTWITHSTANDING the proximity of the Mexican Republic, the average American, at present, knows less of its twelve millions of people, their needs, their commerce or of the extent and enormous resources of the country they inhabit, than do the more distant French, German, Spanish or English traders who have, thus far, successfully monopolized so large a part of their trade and possibilities. In fact the average American—educated though he be—is more familiar with any part of Europe; has a better knowledge of China and Japan; and actually knows more about the Transvaal in South Africa, than he does of the Great Republic that forms a portion of the southern boundary of his own country, and which, from his defective knowledge, he continues to view as more remote than the distant countries named.

Nevertheless the most remote state capital in all Mexico is nearer the continental market of Chicago, than are either of the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland or Seattle. In fact the most southern state in the Republic is as near Chicago as are the states of Washington, Oregon or California; and is correspondingly as much nearer the great cities of the Atlantic seaboard. These simple geographical facts are seemingly unknown to more than one in one thousand of the discontented Americans now settled along the semi-arid border lands of Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas. Hundreds of thousands of these enterprising people are anxiously looking for some more inviting locality than the wind-swept half arid plains they now occupy; but nothing offers save only the forbidding sage brush, semi-desert lands that stretch from Kansas and Nebraska westward to the Pacific Ocean and which, to redeem and make in the least productive, cost more per acre than would proportionately an improved farm of more desirable land in states east of the Mississippi river.

With the creation of the territory of Oklahoma came the absorption, by pre-emption and homestead entry, of the last acre of *arable* free lands of the United States. At the opening up of this last of a one time grand domain, more than a hundred thousand homeseekers stood in a lengthened line waiting the signal to join in a mad race that would insure a possible claim, of

doubtful value, to about one in five of the racing contestants. Notwithstanding the absolute exhaustion of the *arable* free lands of the general government and the consequent general advance in land values throughout all the States, European immigration remains unchecked; the arrivals continuing at the rate of three hundred thousand to half a million yearly. These oncoming myriads, added to the natural increase of seventy millions of people, have served to half congest the one-time frontier settlements of the Western States, causing the more intelligent and ambitious to look about them for new fields that may invite their enterprise.

It is the unanimous opinion of all travelers visiting Mexico, that when the American public come to a true knowledge of the immense resources of its nearest neighbor, and learn of the enormous possibilities of its soil and the invitation of its delightful climate, there will then set in such a flood of emigration to the south of the Rio Grande as has never before been known on the American continent; and it is needless to say, those first to avail themselves of these opportunities will be the ones to reap the greatest rewards. All that is lacking to turn this waiting human tide southward, is reliable information of the country, its laws, its products, climate and possibilities.

It is the aim of this brief compilation to add its modest tribute of data and suggestion to the fund of this needed and sought for information.





STATUE OF CUAUTEMOC

CHAPTER I

HUMBOLT'S ESTIMATE OF MEXICO—ITS CONTOUR—DIVERSITY OF CLIMATE—ITS ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS—THE STATE OF CHIAPAS AND ITS RAINFALL.

NO country in the new world is so filled with the ruins of forgotten cities, nor is so rich in its traditions, nor yet so interesting in the romance of its known history as the "Land of the Montezumas." Nor is there on the face of the globe, a country possessing a diversity of soil, climate and products, equal to the states of the Mex-

ican Republic.

So good an authority as the noted scientist Baron von Humboldt has declared that "the diverse climate of Mexico's wrinkled surface makes possible the successful cultivation of every known product useful to man." "Every plant from each and every zone," said that experienced traveller, "can find somewhere in Mexico a congenial soil and climate."

In contour Mexico is mountainous throughout its length and breadth, excepting only the limited arid plains of the great plateau and the still more limited area of level lands on either coast. From its mountainous character, Mexico is found to be as varied in climate



A TRAIL IN THE FOREST



BANANA PLANT

as its rugged contour is diverse in changing altitude; ranging from the perpetual snow line of its lofty mountain summits down to the unchanging verdure of its tropical forests in the *tierra caliente*.

Altitude in Mexico is the chief factor determining climate. In many places in the Republic it is possible to look from freezing altitudes, suitable only for the growing of wheat, or barley, down into valleys green with groves of orange and bananas.

Because of these changing conditions and the consequent change in variety of products, it is impossible to give within the limits of a compilation of this character an intelligent description of more than a very small portion of any one state.

Briefly considered, Mexico, north of latitude 22°, is as arid in character, and much the same in its general topographical features, as our own territories of New Mexico and Arizona, rain in certain localities being almost unknown. South of that parallel, however, the states, as a rule, enjoy a rainfall sufficient for the maturing of the annual crops. Throughout all Mexico only two seasons are recognized, viz: the "wet" and the "dry," the duration of these seasons depending wholly on the locality. In these southern latitudes the proximity of sea and mountain, together with the altitude of the land and prevailing



GOING TO MARKET

air currents, are the factors governing the rainfall and its distribution throughout the year.

Throughout all central and in the greater portion of southern Mexico, the "wet" season covers a period of from three to five months, with a following drouth for the remainder of the year.

While this period of rainfall is usually ample for the maturing of all ordinary crops—corn, beans, etc. irrigation must be resorted to for the successful cultivation of such products as oranges, bananas, cacao, rubber, coffee and in fact all products requiring ample or long continued moisture.

Throughout the southern two-thirds of Vera Cruz, the whole of Tabasco and also the immediate gulf slopes of the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, the rainfall is abundant during eight to ten months of the year. Even in the so-called "dry" months, showers are frequent, rendering irrigation wholly unnecessary at any time. This abundant rainfall—nearly or quite one hundred annual

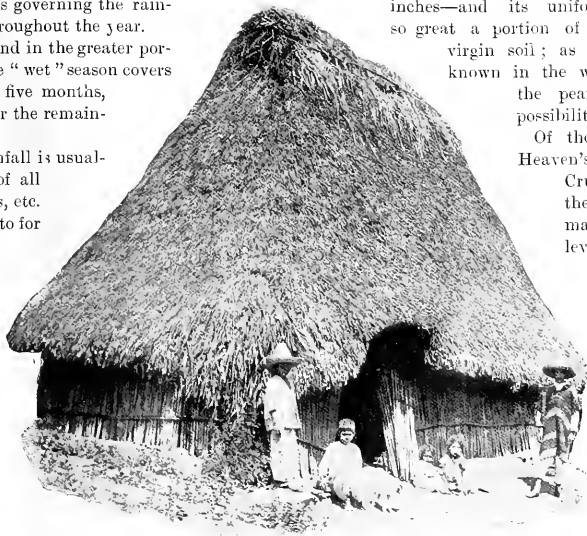
inches—and its uniform distribution throughout so great a portion of the year; together with a virgin soil; as rich and enduring as any known in the world, marks this region as the pearl of Mexico's agricultural possibilities.

Of these states, "so blessed by Heaven's descending rain," Vera Cruz and Tabasco are open to the criticism of undesirable climate; the low altitudes of their level lands, although rich and productive, presenting far less invitation to the northern settler than the more salubrious uplands and mountain slopes of Oaxaca and Chiapas.

Of these latter states, particularly in Chiapas, the mountain streams are as pure and clear as those of New England, while the air, tempered by breezes from both gulf and ocean, brings a climate almost ideal in its perfection, and one that is as healthy and

inviting as that of any known country.

It is of this state of Chiapas, the "Gem" of all the



TYPICAL NATIVE HUT IN THE TROPICS

Mexican states, with which this publication has to deal, a general description of which will occupy its following pages, particular attention being given to the department of Palenke, made famous by the remarkable ruins of a vast, pre-historic city found buried in the depths of its forests and from which the department takes its name.



OTHER MEXICAN PRODUCTS



CHAPTER II.

PRE-HISTORIC CHIASPAS—THE MAYA PEOPLE—THEIR TRADITIONAL MIGRATION—
FIRST INVASION BY SPANIARDS UNDER MARTIN MARIN—CAPTURE OF THE
CHIAPANEC CAPITAL—INVADED AND SUBJUGATED BY DIEGO MAZARIEGOS—
CHRISTIANIZING THE PEOPLE—CHIASPAS BECOMES A DEPENDENCY OF GUATEMALA.

THE state of Chiapas, lying between the parallels of 14° 31' and 17° 51' north latitude, is the most southern of all the states in the Republic of Mexico. It is bounded on the north by the state of Tabasco, on the south by the Pacific Ocean ; on the east by the Republic of Guatemala and on the west by the states of

Oaxaca and Vera Cruz. Its 23,800 square miles of territory makes it the sixteenth in area among the twenty-seven Mexican states.

Real information as to the immediate pre-Columbian history of Chiapas, although very imperfect, is by no means wholly wanting. But its more ancient civilization—a civilization that mutely declares itself in the vast size of its forgotten cities—remains sealed in the hieroglyphics of its wonderfully carved tablets of stone and sculptured monoliths, that still lie waiting the uncovering of some "Rosetta Stone" to unlock their hidden secrets that tell of their mysterious builders.

To a greater extent than almost any other portion of the Mexican Republic, the soil of the state of Chiapas is found to be a very cemetery of buried cities. So numerous are these ancient



A TRIBUTARY OF THE MICHOI

monuments that no single Department in the entire state but what contains at least one or more of these one time populous and busy but now forgotten marts of trade. Indeed so common are these antiquities that they are viewed with little interest by the people, the more noted ruins of Palenke, because of their better preservation, alone being mentioned as deserving attention. Nevertheless scattered throughout the state are remains indicating a still higher antiquity than do the palaces and temples of the more famous city named.

Of these more ancient relics may be mentioned the pre-historic highway found here and there leading along the southern slopes of the Sierra Madre in the Departments of Tonalá and Soconusco; and that further exploration may find as extending southward through Central America and north at least to the state of Sinaloa. The remains of this great work of a vanished people are similar in general design and engineering features to the famed highway of the Peruvian Incas.

The people found in possession of what is now the



state of Chiapas, by the conquering Spaniard, were a number of tribes allied to the great Maya family; a race with the most interesting civilization, in many respects, of any of the natives of the New World, not excepting the Incas of Peru; and one certainly more refined and refining in its influences, than the harsh ethics of the more martial Aztecs.

According to Maya tradition their people originally came together from opposite directions, from the east and from the west, being guided across lands and seas by a Deity. It is certain they possessed vessels that were decked, and understood something of navigation. The first legendary personages of Mayan tradition, at once gods, heroes and founders of empires, are Votan and Zamna, to

whom were attributed all the national institutions and inventions since the beginning of the world. After them came Cukulean—suspiciously similar in attributes to the Mexican demi-god Quetzalcoatl—who was followed in turn by Tutul Xiu. According to National legend this dynasty lasted for more than eleven centuries; and despite incessant wars; the loss of cities and other calamities, it was still holding sway

MAYA TYPES

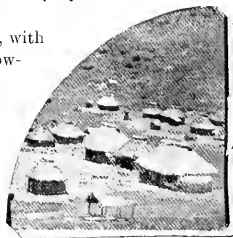


A BIT OF FOREST

over a large country down to the coming of the Spaniard. With the arrival of this ruthless robber, came the extinction of the political life and civilization of the Maya people and well nigh the extinction of the race itself. Though fearlessly brave and independent in spirit these bold mountaineers were unable to cope with the Spaniards' superior military skill and weapons and soon shared the dismal fate that befell all others of the unfortunate native races in Mexico.

In 1523, that pitiless scourge, Cortez, equipped a force of one hundred and ten Spaniards together with a numerous auxiliary of natives which, under the command of one of his assistant butchers—Martin Marin—was directed to subjugate the country now comprising the state of Chiapas. Invading the country by the native high-ways, leading up the banks of the Mescalapa river, Marin fought his way from Tabasco to Chiapa, the then capital of the Chiapanec nation. Here behind the ramparts of their stone fortress—remnants of which still remain—the gallant mountaineers made their last grand rally in defense of their ancestral homes. For days a gallant defense was made against the siege of the Spaniards and their host of native allies. But in the end overpowered and driven to the last extremity, and scorning the slavery that surrender implied, the unconquerable survivors gathered their wives and children in their arms, and thus locked in a last embrace, threw themselves over the precipice to certain death on the rocks that lay hundreds of feet below. Thousands of these brave people are said to have met death in this manner.

After the capture of the Chiapanec capital, Marin, with fire and sword soon overran the entire country, not however without meeting with a stubborn resistance for, in the end, while he had conquered the country, his losses left him too weak in numbers to establish his intended settlement, and after six months unprofitable butchering, he withdrew to Tabasco leaving the country at comparative peace for three years.



A NATIVE VILLAGE

In 1526 the Spaniards again returned, this time under the command of Diego Mazariegos, who fairly and finally subjugated the country; and although outbreaks occurred at intervals for many years, the power of the people was broken never to recover itself. Near the site of the ancient capital city of Chiapa—the one so gallantly defended by its people against Marin—Mazariegos founded the first Spanish settlement in the state, and which has retained the name of the ancient city of Chiapa, a view of which appears on this page.

Having subdued the people Mazariegos proceeded to divide the lands and the inhabitants among his followers and instituted a government on the usual lines of tribute and peonage laid down by the early conquistadores. The rule of this man, though brief, was as just as could be expected from a commissioned robber; but unfortunately was followed by the brutal Guzman and a long line of merciless oppressors.

With the religious zeal characteristic of the day and age, the conquerors upon the final submission of the people, began at once—with the usual bristling accompaniment of arms—the christianizing of such of the inhabitants as had, unfortunately, survived the slaughter of their subjugation. To supervise and aid this holy work the humane Las Casas was sent to Chiapas and in 1543 was made Bishop of the country. This pious priest—the only known Spaniard ever suspected of human sympathy—was prompt to vigorously denounce the barbarous treatment the simple natives were receiving at the hands of his unfeeling countrymen—a treatment that, in the atmosphere of the nineteenth century, shocks humanity to read. However, the protests of the holy man went unheeded, the pillage and plunder of the defenseless people continued until such as could escape their bondage, sought safety in the protecting wilds of the forest.

With the founding of the town of Chiapa and the earlier settlements, what is now the state of Chiapas, remained for some time a debatable land of ownership, at last it fell to the captain generality of Guatemala, remaining a dependency of that country through nearly the full limit of three long centuries of Spanish misrule and misery.



THE TOWN OF CHIAPA



CHIAPANEC WOMAN

CHAPTER III

OPPRESSIVE LEGISLATION—REBELS AGAINST SPAIN—ALLIES ITSELF WITH MEXICO—SHARES IN THE TURMOILS OF THAT COUNTRY—PORFIRIO DIAZ—POPULATION—THE PEOPLE AND THEIR HOSPITALITY—LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS—DOMESTIC ECONOMY—SURVIVING NATIVE CUSTOMS—RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND SUPERSTITIONS—THE FEDERAL SCHOOLS.

FOR three hundred years following the conquest Chiapas, in common with all Spanish America, was throttled by the barbarous oppression of its alien rulers, whose only theory of government was that of "farming the people." No Mexican, whatever his rank or station, was permitted to hold office or was given the least voice in the affairs of his own country. Among the countless blighting Spanish statutes enacted—regardless of the suitability of soil and climate or of the necessities of the people—was the absolute prohibition of the manufacture or cultivation of anything in Mexico that could be made or grown in Spain. For three long centuries the planting of the vine, the olive, and many other useful products was a statutory crime throughout all Mexico; and so late as the year 1819 it still remained a criminal offense for the ship of any nation, other than Spain, to enter any Mexican port. So

jealous were these royal bandits that even the shipwrecked mariner, cast upon its inhospitable shores, was fortunate indeed, if no worse fate befell him than confinement in a Spanish dungeon until deported from the country. These accumulating smothering Spanish statutes at last led to the general revolt in which Chiapas promptly joined. Declaring its independence of Guatemala in 1821, it maintained its political autonomy for three years, and then allied its fortunes with those of Mexico, becoming a state of the Republic in 1824.

Compelled at last to acknowledge the independence of her misgoverned colonies, Spain's parting gift was the legacy of her three hundred years of corruption and vicious laws; a heritage of evil that proved a Pandora's box—a sea of troubles, that filled the country with strife and turmoil through all the years that lay between the rule of the last of the viceroys and the coming of that grandest character in Mexican history—Porfirio Diaz—at once the Washington, Lincoln and Grant of his country.

This greatest of all Mexicans—equipped only with his genius and his naked sword—with an ill-clad, half-armed peasantry, first drove the drilled battalions of his country's enemies from its shores in broken rout; and then—with the diplomacy

of a Tallyrand--reconciled the internal factions born of fifty years of civil discord and gave permanent peace to his long distracted country. With continued peace his matchless statesmanship has brought prosperity and happiness to twelve millions of contented people—a record unexcelled by any man, in any country, in any age. When the unbiased history of this remarkable man comes to be written and the splendor of his achievements in war and in peace shall be told,

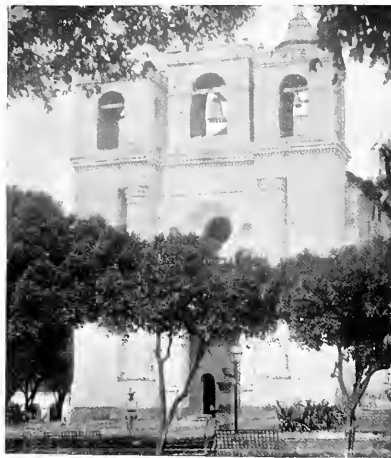
the verdict of mankind will place him as the First Soldier; First Diplomat; First Statesman and Patriot of his Century.

The state of Chiapas, having survived the three

hundred years of Spanish oppression and outlived the fifty years of its own revolutions, has now fairly entered upon the era of prosperity brought to the whole country by the illustrious Diaz. Life and property are today as secure and travel as safe in the state of Chiapas (and for that matter in any state in the Republic) as it is in any part of the United States, not excepting New England. Any statement to the contrary is simply the cheap tale of the shallow traveler who seeks, in the telling, to pose as the hero of "thrilling adventure."

Relating to this feature of the law-abiding character of the Mexican people it can be stated as a dactical fact, that the violent deaths among their twelve millions of population during the year 1894, were less than *one-fourth* of the number of violent deaths among any twelve millions of people in the United States for the same period of time.

By the census of 1892 the population of the state of Chiapas is placed



PARISH CHURCH AT TUXTLA



MARKET OR PLAZA—TUXTLA



A VIEW ON THE TRAIL

at 276,789. Of this number 117,723 are whites and mixed bloods, while 159,066 are returned as Indians.

To a polished politeness, the educated Chiapan adds the merit of a hospitality unknown to the selfish, though courtly reserve of his Spanish ancestry. This virtue of hospitality is shared equally by the common people, and has even, in large measure, been absorbed by the native Indian. As an endorsement of this universal hospitality, the writer will here take occasion to say, that in a recent journey of several hundred miles through the state of Chiapas no request for accommodations ever met with refusal from high or low, white man or Indian. It is true that in remote places and in the Indian towns of the interior, the accommodations were often of the most primitive character and the fare sometimes meager, but the shelter and fare such as the hospitable owner had to offer was cheerfully given.

While Spanish is, of course, the language of the country, still tens of thousands of its Indian population speak only some one of the half score or more of native dialects common within the borders of the state.

In their domestic economy the inhabitants of Chiapas are similar in habit to the people of the Republic generally. In their food supply ninety-five per cent of these people confine themselves to the same limited range of products—corn, beans, chilis and indigenous fruits, and continue much the same primitive methods of preparation found common at the time of the conquest. The tortilla, made from corn, is the universal bread, the staff of life of all Mexicans, except perhaps the limited aristocracy. In the preparation of this bread or cake, the corn is first softened in lime water and is then crushed upon a grinding stone—the Mexican *metate*—to a paste, and is then fashioned by the deft fingers of the woman into the ever present tortilla. The woman at the “*metate*” grinding corn is about the most common sight in all Mexico.

Among the surviving customs of the native Indian, is that of the use of cacao or chocolate beans, in certain localities of the state, as money. During the summer of 1896, the established “rate of exchange”



GRINDING CORN FOR TORTILLAS

at Quechula on the Mescalapa river, recognized eight of these beans as equivalent to the value of one cent Mexican money. In pre-Columbian times cacao constituted a part of the national currency throughout the Ancient Empire. They also, in many localities, cling to their old-time communistic ideas. In the pueblos or native towns, the population all labor in the fields, which are common property, under the direction of the chief man of the village. All crops are thus cultivated, harvested, stored, and then issued as required with a just regard to the needs and necessities of all. In this distribution the old, the feeble and the sick share equally with the well and robust, old age being given especial care and attention.

The entire white population of Chiapas is Catholic in its religious belief; so too, in a sense, are a majority of the Indians inhabiting the state. However, many of these so-called christian Indians, particularly those of Maya descent, are often found to mingle in their private worship certain of their pagan rites. These people have also preserved much of their ancient lore regarding the healing art and the stars. Their astrologers still observe the conjunction of the constellations, predicting from them the public and private events of life, the results of the harvests and similar forecasts. In Campeche and Yucatan, where these Maya people constitute the bulk of the population, the mingling of these pagan and christian rites is still more pronounced. There every village has its "cunning man" who continues to read the future in a quartz crystal globe. Formerly every Maya town possessed its Chilán-Balam book, that is the "Interpreter of the Oracles," now only about a dozen are known. Among the illiterate clergy are certain priests, either very complacent or very ignorant of the orthodox church rites, who still celebrate, with the people, the *Misa Milpera* or "field mass," at which a cock is sacrificed, the four cardinal points being first sprinkled with some fermented liquor, with invocations both to the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity and to the Pah-ah-tun, that is, the four ancient patrons of the rain and the crops. These tutelar Deities, have, however, taken Christian names, the Red or God of the East, having become St. Dominic; the White or God of the North, St. Gabriel; the Black or God of the West, St. James, and the Yellow Goddess of the South, Mary Magdalene.

The school system of the Federal government is being rapidly extended throughout the state of Chiapas and is perceptibly diminishing its high percentage of illiteracy and gradually melting its superstitions. Its white population is naturally as intelligent as those of any country, while it is well known that the native Indians, especially those of Maya ancestry are much superior both physically and mentally to the plateau natives of the farther north. A few years more and the Federal school will have reversed the present ratio of illiteracy in the state of Chiapas.



HOTEL DE LAS TORTILLAS Y FRIJOLES



CANON OF EL SUMIDERO

CHAPTER IV

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION — BOUNDARIES — TOPOGRAPHY — RIVER DRAINAGE — MOUNTAIN SYSTEMS — POSSIBILITIES OF POPULATION COMPARED WITH SWITZERLAND — COMMERCIAL AVENUES: PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE — CLIMATE — PRODUCTS — POLITICAL SUBDIVISION.

IN topography the state of Chiapas is mountainous throughout, being occupied by two fairly detached if not distinct mountain systems, which are separated by a grand depression extending the entire length of the state from southeast to northwest, and through which flow the waters of the Mescalapa river to the Gulf of Mexico. This river, one of the largest in all Mexico, takes its rise in the Republic of Guatemala, and in its seaward course serves, with its tributaries, as the principal drainage system of Chiapas. The principal mountain range is the Sierra Madre, which on a line parallel to the Pacific, traverses the state from Guatemala to the state of Oaxaca and forms the watershed between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Rising abruptly from a narrow fringe of low lying coast land, the Sierra Madre rapidly attains the altitude of from 2500 to 5000 feet; its crest at no point being more than forty miles distant from the Pacific tide waters. On its northern slopes, however, the descent is more gradual falling away into rolling plateaus and fertile valleys, delightful in climate and productive in soil.

The mountain system to the north of the Mescalapa river consists of lateral spurs from the main cordillera, through which the great river has broken its way, together with



A COFFEE TREE FROM WHICH IS HARVESTED 40 POUNDS AND OVER OF COFFEE
PER YEAR

detached and more independent ranges. trend of all these spurs and minor ranges is approximately north to south, the mountain mass culminating in a lofty plateau of 7000 to 8000 feet in the central portion of the state. The Usumacinta river marking for some distance the boundary between the Republic of Mexico and Guatemala drains considerable of the eastern portion of the state and is, next to the Mississippi, the largest river falling into the Gulf of Mexico.

The northern portion of the state, comprising the departments of Pichucalco, Simojovel and Palenke are drained largely by the Blanco, Macuspana and Tulija rivers.

Notwithstanding its mountainous character, Chiapas is really much less broken in contour than is Switzerland in Europe. This Alpine Confederation sustains a prosperous population of 250 to each square

The general

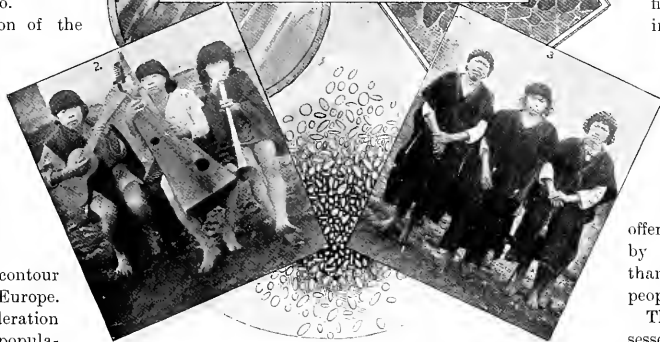


mile of its available territory. On this basis of density of settlement, Chiapas will be found capable of sustaining a population of not less than six millions. Again, if to these estimates be added the superior climate and consequent greater productiveness of the soil of Chiapas over that of the Swiss Re-

public, it will be found that the state of Chiapas can maintain within its borders more than twelve millions of people. These figures may seem astounding but the ratios figured are absolutely correct.

Of manufacturing industries, the state cannot be said to contain a single important institution. However, the field thus open to capital offers the invitation implied by the consumption of more than a quarter of a million of people.

The state at present possesses no line of railway, although a recent concession



TYPES OF FOREST TRIBES



CAOPO PODS AND BEANS

contemplates the construction of a road from San Geronimo on the Tehuantepec railway via Tonalá and Tapachula to Juárez on the Guatemalan frontier; and also a line from Tuxtla, the capital, intersecting the above line at a point south of the Sierra Madre. These proposed lines will no doubt be built at an early date. At present the only road in the state suitable to a wheeled vehicle is the one from Tuxtla via San Miguel and Dolores to San Geronimo on the Tehuantepec Railway.

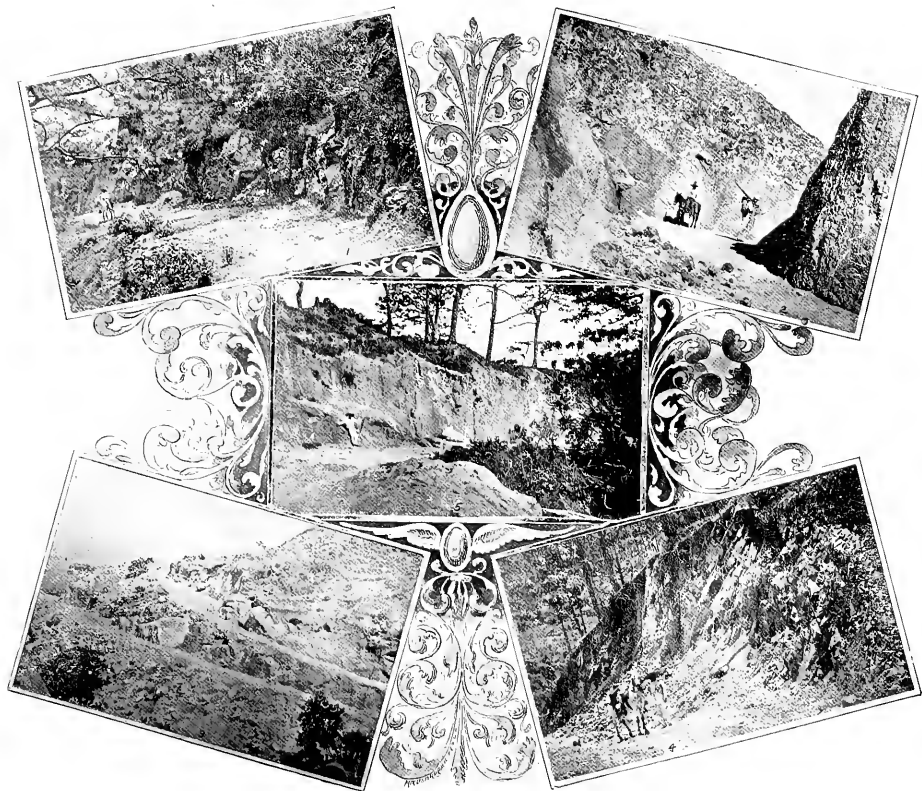
Climate. Lying well within the zone of the changing trade winds; the short distance from ocean to ocean, and the general high altitude of its uneven surface, are conditions insuring to the state of Chiapas the most perfect climate known on the continent. All the border departments on the north together with Chilon and a portion of northeastern Comitán are forest grown, while all the other departments of the state lie within the zone of the dry seasons which, extending over a period of from four to six months, make possible only a limited tree growth, thereby giving to all that part of the country an "open" character.

Products. The changing contour of so great a scope of country as Chiapas, reaching from sea level to altitudes of 8000 feet and more, presents every variety of climate from that of freezing cold to that of perpetual summer, a range of temperature that in turn makes possible a variety of products known to few other localities on the globe.

Here, from the table lands as cold in climate as Missouri, waving fields of wheat and barley look down on valleys clothed in perpetual green, where frost is never known and where flourish the almost countless products found only in the tropics.

The more important export products of the state consists of coffee, sugar, vanilla, indigo, hennequen, cacao (the bean from which the chocolate of commerce is prepared), cocoanuts and rubber.

Wheat, beans, rice, and all other grains, fruits and vegetables, common to



VIEWS ON WAGON ROAD FROM TUXTLA TO SAN GERONIMO.

both the tropical and temperate zones, are produced in abundance at the various suitable altitudes in the state, but only in such quantities as are necessary to meet the local demand.

Of the export products coffee is the principal, the state sending abroad in 1892 the grand aggregate of 1,761,633 pounds.

Stock raising is an important and, in some departments, the principal industry, horses and cattle finding a ready market in the adjoining Republic of Guatemala.

The political sub-divisions of the state of Chiapas, comprise twelve departments or counties, the city of Tuxtla being the capital.

Of these various departments a brief synopsis will now be given.



RAPIDS OF THE MAL PASO



A COCOANUT PALM

CHAPTER V

A SYNOPSIS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF SOCONUSCO, TONALA, COMITAN, LAS CASAS, LA LIBERTAD, CHIAPA, TUXTLA, MESCALAPA, PICHUICALCO, SIMOJOVEL AND CHILON.

Soconusco.

THE department of Soconusco lies between the crest of the Sierra Madre mountains and the Pacific a narrow strip of level land extending along its coast. From among the poorest and least desirable, Soconusco has become, within a few years, one of the richest and best known departments in the state; in which it stands sixth in population; seventh in area; second in instruction and also second in property valuation which is returned at \$3,838,301.00. An amount that divided among its 20,928 inhabitants allots a wealth of nearly \$200.00 per capita. Of the population 7,372 are Indians, nearly all of whom speak Spanish.

Blessed with an abundant water supply from its numerous streams with which to irrigate a soil peculiarly adapted to the production of coffee, the cultivation of the bean has rapidly extended over the greater portion of the department, bringing wealth to everyone engaged in the industry.

Principal Towns. Tapachula with its 5,000 inhabitants, is the commercial center and present seat of government of the department, which consists of seventeen municipalities.

Tuxtla Chico, Nuehuetan, Union, Juarez, and Escuintla are all towns boasting a population of more than 1000 each.

San Benito located on an open roadstead is the only seaport in Soconusco. The Pacific mail line of steamships call at this port twice each month.

The open character of the port exposed to certain winds, is considered unsafe from August to October and the lighterage charges are excessive \$7.50 per ton being charged.

Communications.* A good trail leads from Tapachula to Tonalá, also from Tapachula to the frontier where it connects with the trails of Guatemala. To San Cristobal and Comitán there are the usual rough mule trails only.

The prospective lines of travel are a railway, expected to be built in the immediate future, having its initial at San Geronimo on the Tehuantepec railway thence via Tonalá to Tapachula and so on to the Guatemalan frontier.

Products.* Coffee is the chief product. The raising of live stock and the manufacture of sugar and native brandy are also profitable industries. Cacao, at one time the principal product of the department, is of superior quality. The rubber and coconut trees are now being planted to a considerable extent. Labor is in fairly good supply at from eighteen to twenty-five cents per day.

A battalion of the Mexican Federal Army is stationed at the International Mexican-Guatemalan border in this department.

Climate.* While not so undesirable as that of Tonalá, the climate is by no means perfect, although in the higher coffee regions it is fairly healthy and pleasant.

Tonalá.

THE department of Tonalá occupies the greater portion, in length, of the narrow strip of territory in the state of Chiapas, lying between the crest of the coast range and the Pacific Ocean. Between sea and mountains lies a narrow fringe of low flat land from which the Sierra Madre, or coast range, rise abruptly to altitudes of from 2500 to 5000 feet.

Compared with other departments, Tonalá is fifth in area of territory ; eleventh in population and seventh in instruction ; three per cent of its 10,000 inhabitants being able to read and write. Its property valuation of \$648,303.00 gives it eighth place in point of wealth. There is no Indian population in this Department.

Principal Towns.* Tonalá, situated about eleven miles from the port of Arista, is the seat of government for the department and is the place of residence for the Federal customs and other officials. It has a population of about 3500 and is the port of entry and export for the southern part of the state of Chiapas. There are no other



"HOME, SWEET HOME"

towns of importance. The port of Arista is a hamlet of less than 200 people. On the mountain slopes to the north of Tonalá is found an interesting group of ruins which include an ancient "temple" with carved blocks of stone. The remains are also found of an ancient paved roadway carried along the mountain sides, similar in design and engineering to the famed paved highways of the Incas of Peru.

The principal thoroughfare is the wagon road and trail leading from the port of Arista through Tonalá to the interior of the state at Tuxtla, and also to San Geronimo on the Tehuantepec railway. A wagon road also leads through the department



A VIEW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF TONALA

southeast to Tapachula. The prospective railway lines are, a line having its initial at San Geronimo on the Tehuantepec railway, running thence via Tonalá to Tapachula and the Guatemalan frontier. Also a line from the port of Arista through Tonalá to Tuxtla. The final construction of these two lines are matters of the near future.

Products and Industries.* Stock raising, salt making and the sea fish-indigo, coconuts, tobacco and rubber are the principal products. The that of Simojovel.

Climate.* The climate is oppressively hot during the summer decidedly unhealthy at all seasons of the year. At the high endurable and the health feature much improved.

eries are the chief industries, while coffee, tobacco is said to be equal in quality to

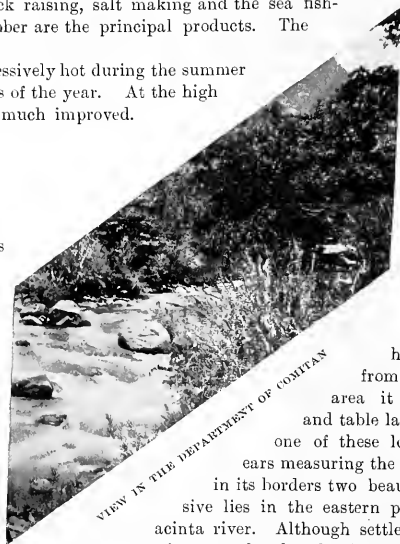
season ; and along the low coast lands is er mountain altitudes the climate is

Comitan.

THE department of Comitan is of the state. Adjoining Guat two-thirds of the boundary line Chiapas. While third in prop in instruction, more than nine being classed as illiterate. The elsewhere, being accounted for number. From its extensive contour that includes high plains numerous fertile valleys. In where corn is produced with

Comitan also includes with and the other and more extend drain its waters into the Usum department, like that of Chilon,

Principal Towns.* Comitan



VIEW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMITAN

the largest in area of all the sub-divisions emala its eastern limits define more than between that Republic and the state of erty valuation, Comitan is only eleventh ty-five per cent of its population of 45,373

high rate of illiteracy in this department, as from its large preponderance of Indians 32,657 in area it presents the many and varied features of and table lands, with rugged mountain ranges inclosing one of these localities is the famed plantation of Joncana ears measuring the enormous length of twenty-three inches.

in its borders two beautiful lakes, one near the town of Comitan sive lies in the eastern portion of the department and is supposed to acinta river. Although settled for more than 300 years much of this remains unexplored and is but little known.

with a population of 6,430 is the seat of government and is considered one of the

best built cities in the state. A federal custom house for the collection of duties on Guatemalan importations is located here and the place supports a number of schools. Pinola, Margaritas, Motozintla, Zapaluta, are all towns exceeding 1500 in population.

Communications.✱ Possessing only the usual mule pack trails, travel to and from any part of Comitán is laborious and difficult and the transportation of merchandise expensive.

Products and Industries.✱ Comitán is a large producer of grain, cattle, horses, brandy, and considerable quantities of Copal gum, all finding a ready market across the border in Guatemala.

Climate.✱ The climate is as salubrious as any in Mexico.

Las Casas.

THE department of Las Casas, named in honor of the eminently humane priest "Las

Casas," occupies the most central position and lies at the highest altitude of any in the state. It stands first in population, but is lowest of all in instruction, less than three per cent being able to read or write. While first in population and ninth in area, and although containing the largest city in the state, it is, next to Mescalapa, the lowest of all in property valuation, the entire holdings of its 50,915 inhabitants invoicing only \$341,215, a wealth of less than \$7.00 per capita.

The department is divided into sixteen municipalities of which San Cristobal—a city of 10,570 inhabitants—is the present seat of government. This important city, founded by Diego Mazariegos in 1528, occupies a beautiful valley 6902 feet above the level of the sea, which was anciently known as "Hueyzacatlan" or cold land, and lies under the parallel of 16° 34' north latitude. It is the present ecclesiastical headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church for the state, the residence of the bishop and until 1892 was the capital of Chiapas.

Principal Towns.✱ Aside from the city of San Cristobal the principal towns are Zinacantan, the ancient capital of the native Quelenes. In this ancient city were once elected the kings of the Quiche nation. The Indian town of Chamula contains even a greater population than San Cristobal, its people numbering no less than 12,356 inhabitants, who serve as porters in carrying goods throughout



DESCENDANT OF AN ANCIENT KING

the state and supply the city of San Cristobal with its market products, from which it is distant only about seven miles.

Communications.✱ From its rugged and mountainous character, the department is difficult of approach from any direction. The lines of travel are the usual rough trails used by mules and native porters. One of these trails leads to Comitán, one to the state capital at Tuxtla, while another reaches El Salto on the Tulija river in the department of Palenke—El Salto serving as San Cristobal's port of entry for goods received from the Gulf coast.

Products.✱ Wheat is the principal product of this department and is high grade, said to equal in quality the "No. 1 hard" of Minnesota. From its high altitude all the fruits and vegetables of the colder latitudes of the temperate zone are easily produced and are of fine quality.

Climate.✱ From its extreme high altitude the greater portion of the department is cold and even severe during the winter months, the temperature

ature frequently falling to zero, and even to points below. Labor in this department is abundant, with wages at from nine to twelve and one-half cents per day.

La Libertad.

THE country falling within the boundary lines of the department of La Libertad, consists of extensive plains and rolling table lands, becoming more mountainous along its southern boundary, in which locality is found, in limited quantities, land suitable for the production of coffee. La Libertad is third in area and ninth in population among the departments of the state. Nearly eight per cent of its 14,029 inhabitants, 6920 of whom are Indians, being able to read and write, places it sixth in instruction, while its property valuation of \$1,262,188.00 makes it fifth in wealth.

VIEW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LA LIBERTAD

Principal Towns.* San Bartolome, with its population of 3337, is the seat of government. The remaining towns in the department are of slight importance, none excepting La Concordia having a population of five hundred.

Near the town of San Bartolome are found the ruins of the pre-historic city of Copanabastla.

Communications.* The pack trails throughout the department are fairly good excepting those leading out to San Cristobal and Comitán, which are rugged and difficult.

Products and Industries.* Stock raising is the principal industry, the markets being San Cristobal and Guatemala. Coffee is produced in limited quantities. Salt is also manufactured to a limited extent, being evaporated from the saline waters found in certain arroyos. Corn, beans, rice, indigo and cotton are among the principal products.

Climate.* The climate is warm and in certain localities is considered unhealthy.

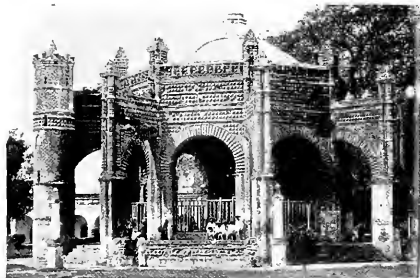
Chiapa.

CHIAPA is one of the more central departments of the state; is rough in contour in the north, with many fertile valleys enclosed by lofty mountains, while in the south is found the beautiful and fertile valley of La Frailesca, the one time property of the Dominican Brotherhood of Chiapas, but now divided into haciendas devoted in great part to stock raising and corn.

Lands along the Mescalapa river, particularly near the town of Chiapa, are among the most valuable in the state, being held at \$25.00 per hectara (about two and one-half acres) and upwards.

It is seventh in population in the state; fourth in instruction; fourth also in area, and sixth in property valuation. The nine municipalities of which it is composed, being returned at \$1,202,184 indicates a fairly prosperous condition for its 20,101 inhabitants—prosperous at least when compared with such departments as that of Las Casas.

Principal Towns.* The town of Chiapa—a view of which is given on page 20, was the first settlement founded by the conquering



FOUNTAIN, TOWN OF CHIAPA

Spaniards in 1527. It is located on the north bank of the Mescalapa, seven miles distant from the capital city of Tuxtla, and not far from the site of the ancient native city of the same name. It holds a population of about 5000, is the seat of government, the residence of the officials of the department and enjoys a limited trade. Chiapilla, Ixtapa, Villaflores are the other more important towns.

Communications.* A wagon road leads from the town of Chiapa to the capital city of Tuxtla, but to other points only the ordinary mule trails are available.

Industries and Products.* Stock raising, sugar making and the cultivation of tobacco, cotton and corn comprise the principal industries and products of the department.

Climate.* Along the lower levels, near the Mescalapa river, the weather is warm, but is cooler in the more elevated northern and eastern parts.

Tuxtla.

LYING within the borders of the department of Tuxtla are some of the most beautiful valleys and extensive table lands to be found in the state, the northwest corner alone being ruggedly mountainous or difficult of access.

In area the department of Tuxtla is second in importance in the state; fourth in population and first in instruction. Of its 20,338 inhabitants 8773 are Indians, 2400 of whom do not speak Spanish. Notwithstanding this large proportion of Indians, fifteen per cent of the entire population are able to read and write. The property valuation of the department is placed at \$1,573,521.00.

Principal Towns.* Tuxtla, in its architecture, is a typical Spanish-American city. It is the seat of government for the department; is the capital of the state and the commercial center for the surrounding departments. There is here located an Industrial Military School, a Female College and a High School, all being under state patronage and control. It is the residence of all the state and department officials, and is in telegraphic communication with all important towns in the state and with all the other states of the Republic. It also possesses a neat market; a government palace or capital building and several churches—however its 6581 inhabitants support only a single priest. There is also stationed at this point a battalion of the national military. The merchants and citizens of Tuxtla are more enterprising than those of any other city in the state.

Communications.* A well built, well engineered highway, over which a six-horse coach can be driven with ease and safety, leads from the city of Tuxtla to San Geronimo, on the Tehuantepec railway. There is also a wagon road from Tuxtla to Buena

Vista and from Calera to Arista—the port of entry for Tonalá on the Pacific; it is unfinished for a distance of nine leagues between Buena Vista and Calera. The road between Tuxtla and San Geronimo, views of which are given on page 29, is the most important public work in the state. The benefits to the public, following the opening of this highway, have encouraged the government to inaugurate like improvements throughout the state.

Among other prospective lines of travel and commerce is a contemplated railway from Tuxtla to a junction with the proposed San Geronimo-Tonalá railroad, a concession for the construction of which has been let and will no doubt be completed in the near future.

Industries and Products. Stock raising is the principal industry of the department at large, while the manufacture of cigars, cigarettes, leather and brandy are carried on to a considerable extent in the city of Tuxtla. Indigo, sugar, coffee and hennequen are the principal products, of which coffee is the chief.

Climate. The climate will average equally as desirable as any in the state.



DON RODRIGO RANCHO, DEPARTMENT OF TUXTLA



RUINED CHURCH, QUECHULA

to the production of coffee, cacao, tobacco and other tropical products, many of which are indigenous to the locality.

Principal Towns. Copainalá, with a population of 2221, is the seat of government and is situated in the southern part of the department on the banks of a river of the same name. Tecpatán, situated in the midst of a promising coffee region, was once the ancient capital of the one-time powerful Zoque nation. There is also found here the ruins of an immense church, founded by the Dominican Brotherhood at an early date following the conquest. The magnitude of these ruins indicate the early importance attached to this particular locality.

Mescalapa.

THE territory of Mescalapa, the least in area of any of the subdivisions of the state, was formed from portions of the departments of Tuxtla, Chiapa and Pichucarco and organized as a separate department in 1892, making of it not only the smallest but also the newest of the departments in the state, it is also twelfth in population and property valuation.

Of its population, 9047—of whom 8162 are Indians—less than six per cent can either read or write; this ratio of illiteracy places it eighth in instruction among the other departments.

Mescalapa is one of the most mountainous in the state; nevertheless a large portion of its surface is clothed with a tropical forest, has an ample rainfall, a rich soil and is suitable



BELOW THE MAL PASO, DEPARTMENT OF MESCALAPA

Quechula is a hamlet of some five hundred inhabitants and is situated at the head of canoe navigation, on the Mescalapa river. At this place there are also the ruins of a large Christian church, a view of which appears on page 40. This church is said to have supported, down to a time within the memory of those now living, a colony of more than twenty pious Dominican brothers. Now a single lonesome priest makes his appearance but once a year to baptize and confess the faithful.

Communications. The natural outlet of this department is by means of the Mescalapa river to the Gulf. This route is, however, seriously impeded by the mad whirlpools of the "Mal Paso," rendering both difficult and dangerous its navigation. The remaining highways are the most rugged of mountain trails.

Industries and Products. Cacao, coffee, tobacco and corn are the principal products, both the coffee and tobacco are of superior quality.

Climate. Along the shores of the Mescalapa river, the weather, although warm throughout the year, is nevertheless considered fairly healthy, while in the region of Tecpatan, the water is pure, and as good health is enjoyed as in any other part of the state.

Pichualco.

OCCUPYING the northwest corner of the state, the department of Pichualco while mountainous in the south and east, falls away to lower altitudes and level lands in the north and west; its changing altitudes giving it a range of climate from that of the hot, moist atmosphere of its low lands to the salubrious and cooler air of its more elevated mountain slopes.

Pichualco possesses an ample rainfall, is clothed with a tropical forest growth, except in its north and westerly portion, and has a soil and climate suitable to the production of all the tropical fruits and products.

In area, Pichualco stands sixth among the subdivisions of the state, is fifth in population, and third in instruction, nearly ten per cent of



ON THE LOWER MESCALAPA, DEPARTMENT OF PICHUALCO

its inhabitants being able to read and write. In property valuation it stands at the head of all the other departments, the distribution of its \$3,529,816 among its 21,391 inhabitants, allotting a wealth of nearly \$175.00 per capita, as against less than \$7.00 per capita found possible in the department of Las Casas, which, although the most populous, is the poorest in the state. Labor in Pichucaleo is in fairly good supply at twenty-five cents per day.

Principal Towns.✱ The town of Pichucalco, with a population of 1763, is the seat of government, and is also of considerable trade importance. Ixtacomitan, Juarez, Tectuapan and Solosuchiapa are the remaining towns of importance.

Travel and Transportation.✱ The trade of the department of Pichucalco is almost wholly with San Juan Bautista and the



ON THE BORDERS OF THE STATE OF TABASCO

port of Frontera in the state of Tabasco, with which points communication is had down the Blanquillo river. To the interior of the state, only the usual rough mountain trails are available.

Industries and Products.✱ The principal products are coffee, sugar and cacao; the last named being the chief. In the north and westerly portions of the department are some of the finest stock ranges in the state, and where breeding is carried on to a limited extent. In the municipality of Solosuchiapa are located the Santa Fe gold mines, the most important in the state.

Climate.✱ At the lower altitudes, the climate is hot and moist, but in the more elevated coffee regions it is more desirable and is considered healthy.



TOWN OF PICHUCALCO



ON THE TAPIJULAPA RIVER

Simojovel.

SIMOJOVEL is one of the three northern departments, occupying a position central to the state east and west. Mountainous throughout, it falls to comparatively low altitudes on its extreme northern border. It is well watered, well timbered, and has an ample rainfall. In territorial area it stands tenth ; ninth in property valuation ; eighth in population and tenth in instruction, nearly ninety-five per cent of its 20,020 inhabitants being classed as illiterates.

Principal Towns.* Simojovel is the seat of government for the department, has a population of 2998 and is the center of trade for the surrounding country. Sabanilla, Platanos and San Pablo, are towns having upwards of 1000 inhabitants each.

Trade and Transportation.* The larger portion of the department is drained by the Tapijulapa river and its tributaries. This river flows northward into the Teapa river in Tabasco, which in turn falls into the Mescalapa, near San Juan Bautista. These several water courses afford the department communication with the city named, which is the principal market for its products. All trails are rough and difficult, the greater portion of commerce with the interior being by means of cargadores or porters, who carry from eighty to one hundred and ten pounds each, on their backs.

Products and Industries.* Tobacco, which is the principal product, is grown in considerable quantities, and is among the finer qualities grown in all Mexico. It is said that tobacco from this department, on being sold in San Juan Bautista, where it brings a high price, is then sent to Havana, in Cuba, from which point it is again forwarded to New York and sold as the golden leaf of the "Ever Faithful Isle," bringing in the New York market as high as \$2.00 to \$6.00 per pound.

In the vicinity of Pueblo Nuevo Solistahuacan and Jitotol is produced a vegetable wax, made by boiling the seeds of a peculiar plant. The wax thus produced being used in the manufacture of candles and soap.

Climate.* Almost any desired climate can be found in Simojovel, from that of the *tierra caliente* of the lower valleys in the north, to the cooler mountain altitudes in the more southern portion.

Chilon.

CHILON—a Maya word—signifying “Sweet Land,” is one of the frontier departments, and in area of territory ranks eighth in the state ; while in population it is third ; in property valuation seventh and in instruction ninth ; only about five per cent of its 27,790 inhabitants being able to read and write. Of this sum total of population 19,514 are Indians, of whom only 337 speak Spanish.

In contour Chilon is generally mountainous, rising in the south to fertile plains, similar to those of Comitán. The department is well watered throughout, has an ample rainfall in the northern portion, as is shown by the tropical forest growth which covers the greater part of its surface. The headwaters of the Tulija river take their rise in this department, flowing north through the department of Palenque. The Jatate is the principal river, falling into the Usumacinta. Although among the richest in natural resources of any of the departments in the state, and although portions of it have been settled ever since the days of the conquest, still much of its territory remains unexplored to the present day, and is therefore unknown. Numerous and interesting antiquities are found throughout this department, notably the ruins of an ancient city, lying near the town of Ocosingo. Of still greater interest are the remains of the pre-historic city, “Lorillard,” found at the extreme northeast corner of the department, in a great bend of the Usumacinta river, and which were but recently discovered by the exploring archæologists, Maudsley and Charney.

Principal Towns.* Ocosingo is the seat of government and possesses a population of 1247. Yajalon, Bachajon, Cancuc and Oxchuc are native towns, numbering in population from 2500 to 3500 each.

Communications.* Chilon is accessible only by mule trails, the principal ones leading to San Cristobal from the southwest and one to El Salto on the north, the last named place serving as the port of entry for merchandise receivable from the Gulf coast.

Products and Industries.* The cultivation of sugar, stock raising and logging—cabinet woods—are the principal industries. All tropical products are possible of successful cultivation in one part or another of the department. In this department

is cultivated a peculiar variety of sugar cane yielding a sugar that, in its natural state, is as white in color as the refined product of commerce. Coffee is produced only to a limited extent, but wherever cultivated produces enormously. In 1893 two hundred trees on the plantation of Don Lisandro Castellanos, yielded the remarkable harvest of 2000 pounds—the equivalent of *ten pounds to the tree*.



A VIEW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILON



CHAPTER VI

Palenke.

AREA AND POPULATION—VISITED BY CORTEZ—SETTLED IN 1650—PRE-HISTORIC CITY OF PALENKE—ITS RUINS—TOPOGRAPHY—RAINFALL—NAVIGABLE RIVERS—CLIMATE—ANIMALS AND INSECTS—SOIL AND PRODUCTS.

THE department of Palenke is eleventh in area among the subdivisions of the state of Chiapas and is fifth in instruction and tenth in population; 10,449 of its 13,825 inhabitants are classed as Indians, of whom only 1455 speak Spanish. It is from this native element that is drawn the labor supply of the department, wages being from eighteen to twenty-five cents per day.

The principal towns are the Indian settlements of Hidalgo in the southwestern portion of the department; San Pedro on the upper Tulija, Tumbala in the center of a prosperous coffee district in the southwest and the Mexican town of El Salto, near the head of navigation on the Tulija river. El Salto is a place of some 700 inhabitants, is the county seat of the department, the residence of the Department officials and quite a point of distribution for the surrounding country. A short distance above this town of El Salto is met the first of a series of cascades in the Tulija river, that in a distance of about four or five miles mark a drop in the river of some 300 feet.

Although superior in its climate; the richest in its natural resources; and the most varied in its products, Palenke was the last to be conquered; the last settled; and until recent date, has remained the least known of all the departments in Chiapas. Cortez in his Honduras campaign, to chastize his faithless Lieutenant Olid, passed through the northern part of what is now the department of Palenke, as early as the year 1524. Following this visit of the pitiless conqueror, the country was seemingly forgotten for more than a hundred years. This long neglect came to an end with the founding of the modern town of Palenke about the year 1650. At a distance of only five miles from this first settlement, lie the magnificent ruins of the famed pre-historic city of Palenke; the most interesting of any of the ruined cities found in the new world. The ancient name of this vast city of the

forest, has perished from the earth with its vanished builders; its present title being derived from the insignificant modern town of Palenke. Although distant but five miles from the settlement named, so dense is the intervening forest that the beautiful temples and massive buildings of this one-time capital of an unknown Empire, remained undiscovered to the near-by Spaniard for nearly a hundred years. On being brought to the notice of the Spanish government in 1750, official examination was ordered at different times, with results that only proved, however much of a conqueror the Spaniard might have been, his mission was surely not that of an archaeologist, his talent evidently being to destroy and not preserve. It remained for Waldeck in 1832 and Stevens and Catherwood in 1840 to really bring the attention of the world to this most wonderful of forgotten cities.



TOWN OF EL SALTO DE AGUA

Following these eminent explorers the ruins have been visited by many travelers and archaeologists, their sculptured temples and palaces have been measured and their inscriptions copied, but lacking the magic key of some "Rosetta stone," their secrets remain fast locked in the mystery of their unknown characters. Of the four views given of these ruins the ones on pages 53 and 55 are those of the "Palace." This building—only a small portion of which is shown in each engraving—measures 228 feet in length by 180 feet in width; a portion of the standing walls still reaching to a height of 30 feet; its columns and walls being of cut stone. The photographic reproduction on page 55 shows one of the entrances to the main inner court. The engraving on page 51 is from a photograph of what is known as the Temple of the Cross, so named from an elaborate cross cut in relief on a slab of stone found in its interior. In size this temple is 50x31 feet and is 40 feet high. Its roof is an overlapping arch of cut stone. The



TEMPLE OF THE SUN, RUINS OF PALENKE



A NATIVE FARM IN THE VALLEY OF THE
MICHOL

illustration on page 49 is that of a building commonly called the Temple of the Sun. This structure is 40x30 feet in size and about 30 feet in height. Its roof, like that of the

Temple of the Cross, is an overlapping arch of stone; the principle of the TRUE arch; that is, the "Keystone," if known to these ancient builders, is a feature in their architecture remaining undiscovered

Of the people or of the civilization that made possible the construction of these wonderful buildings that mark the center of this ancient capital, absolutely nothing is known, not a whispered word has survived its building or builders. Its abandonment is equally as mysterious and forgotten as its founding. Estimates of the age of these ruins by the authorities (?) assign an antiquity of from one thousand to more than five thousand years. A fair consensus of these scientific estimates, is that of a founding in the second century and an abandonment some eight hundred years later. All that is well established is the fact that this capital of unknown kings and emperors was as absolutely forgotten and unknown at the time of the conquest, nearly four hundred years ago, as it was at the date of its discovery in 1746. However, all travelers and authorities agree that these ruins mark the site of a once great and populous city, with busy marts of trade and lines of commerce extending their arteries over a vast empire.

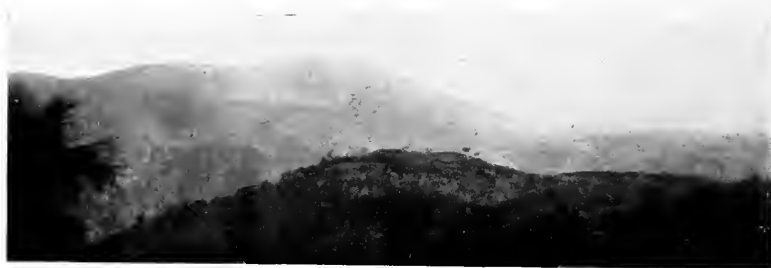
In his "Native Races" Bancroft in closing a chapter on this forgotten city well says:

"That the key of our written history can ever be lost, our civilization blotted out, ruined structures and vague traditions called anew into requisition for historic use, we believe impossible. Yet who can tell; for so doubtless thought the learned men and high priests of Palenke, when with imposing pageant and sacrificial invocation to the Gods in the presence of the assembled populace, the inscribed tablets had been set up in the niches of the temple; and proudly exclaimed the orator of the day, as the last tablet settled into place, 'Great are our Gods and goodly the inheritance they have bequeathed to their chosen people. Mighty is Votan, world-wide the fame of his empire, the great Xibalba; and the annals and the glory thereof shall endure through all the coming ages; for are they not here imperishably inscribed in characters of stone that all may read and wonder?'"

To Bancroft's interesting suggestion of a possible search among the ruins of the future, for some remaining evidence of the



TEMPLE OF THE CROSS, RUINS OF PALENKE



A VIEW OF THE CAMPANARIO RANGE

with the thunderbolts of a thousand years, then scourge their forsaken courts and deserted streets with a score of lightning lit fires and, at the end of their centuries of abandonment, the explorer will find, among all their crumbling ruins, less of chiseled monuments; less of carved tablets and sculptured columns to tell of their building or builders, than has been found in this single long-lost city of Palenke.

The department of Palenke lies on the north flank of the Sierra Madre, its extreme northeasterly quarter extending down to and out upon the open grass lands that reach northward through the state of Tabasco for a hundred miles to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. High and bold in its more southern section, it falls away to foothills and sloping plains in the north, all clothed in a wealth of tropical forest, abounding in mahogany, ebony, rosewood, zapote and other valuable cabinet woods as yet unknown to commerce.

The rainfall along this northern slope of the Sierra Madre, is the most abundant in supply, and the most uniform in distribution throughout the year, of any locality in the state or Republic. Streams of pure, clear water abound throughout the department, winding their way through mountain valleys and rolling foothills down to the Usumacinta, Michol and Tulija rivers, which with their tributaries serve to drain the entire department. Penetrated by two noble rivers, the Tulija in the west, and the Usumacinta along its entire northeastern border, the department is naturally the most accessible of the departments of the state. It is true that both Tonala and Soconusco are bathed by the tides of the Pacific Ocean, but neither possess more than an open roadstead, confessedly dangerous from September to November, while Palenke's magnificent rivers give certain navigation for

present civilization. I will venture to add that: to abandon a dozen of the proudest of America's modern cities; subject them to the devastating storms of ten long centuries; attack their massive piles of brick and stone with the resistless prying growth of penetrating roots below and giant spreading limbs above; rock their foundations with unnumbered earthquakes and blast their cyclopean walls



WESTERN SIDE OF THE PALACE, RUINS OF PALENKE

steamers of good draft every month in the year. Here as in other portions of the state of Chiapas and elsewhere in the Republic, altitude is the chief factor determining climate. In the department of Palenke can be found every variety of climate from the frost and almost freezing temperature of its elevated southern borders, to the unchanging summer of its lower levels on the Tulija and Usumacinta rivers and the beautiful valley of the Rio Michol.

In defiance of the actual facts, however plainly stated or fairly proven, the bias of the northern mind continues to look on all southern countries as being oppressively hot, and that too without regard to altitude or other conditions. No greater or



VIEW ON THE RIO MICHO

more common error exists. As has before been stated, altitude, proximity of sea and mountains, together with the course of prevailing winds are the determining factors in climate, especially in these low latitudes. In the valley of the Rio Michol, at altitudes of from 1000 to 2500 feet, the temperature will never reach 95° in the shade, nor will it ever fall below 55° —an extreme range of 40° . Compare these extremes of temperature with those of Southern California—the Mecca of all climate seeking Americans—where the range is from 110° in the shade during summer months down to 20° in the winter—extremes of 90° —and it will be seen how much more uniform and agreeable is the temperature in Chiapas than in much vaunted California. The warmest



EASTERN SIDE OF THE MAIN COURT OF THE PALACE, RUINS OF PALENKE



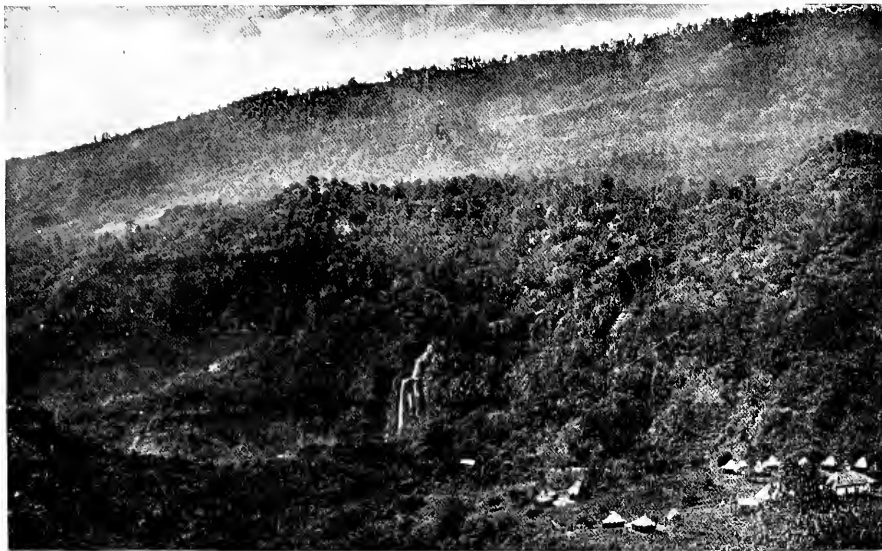
RIVER LANDING, EL SALTO

proached. The existing dangers (?) are always just beyond, over the next mountain range or in the next valley, but NEVER in the particular locality of your visit. The facts are: all these alleged dangers of the country belong to the well-told tales of the traveler who does not intend his experience in foreign lands shall lack the thrill of adventure in relating.

Of insect life—always annoying in any country—it can be said, in a comparative way, that mosquitos, *on cleared land*, are not as bad as along any part of the shores of lakes Michigan in Wisconsin, Erie in Ohio or Ontario in New York. Flies, fleas, scorpions, centipedes and tarantulas are not nearly so numerous in any part of Chiapas, as they are in Southern California. The insects usually quoted as being singular to the country, such as *nihuas*, *rotodores*, *garapatas* and *talajes*, are, in fact, varieties common to most parts of the gulf coast of the United States; and are seemingly given credit for greater blood-thirstiness because their native names have failed to identify them with the same family nearer home,

months are those of March, April and May; these months mark the highest temperature of the year—the 95° quoted—which the intelligent reader will note as being less than that of New York, Chicago, St. Paul or even that of Manitoba, in British America, the last named point being more than thirty degrees farther north than Chiapas. The facts are that the climate of Palenke is less oppressive during summer months than is the climate of any of our southern states, nor is it so trying as the extreme heat of our more northern states. The rainfall, as has been noted, is distributed throughout nearly the entire year, but must not be understood as being continuous. Every forenoon, unless in November, the sun will rise perfectly clear, the clouds beginning to gather toward midday with a following shower of from fifteen to thirty minutes, falling any time between 1 P. M. and midnight. Notwithstanding these frequent showers the hours of sunshine during the year will far exceed in number the hours of clear skies in any of the states of the Ohio valley.

Concerning the droves of wild animals, huge (?) serpents and the swarms of venomous insects said to infest all tropical countries, it is but truth to say that the dangers and deaths from these phantom "bogies" fade away just in the ratio that the country is ap-



A TYPICAL MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE, DEPARTMENT OF PALENKE



TULIJA RIVER, NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE MICHOI

formation, where exposed in the streambeds or covered by a protecting layer of damp earth, is so soft as to be easily cut with a common knife. At the same time this rock, where fully exposed to sun and air, becomes as hard in texture as flint. It is the fertilizing qualities of this peculiar variety of limestone that gives celebrity to the *coffee lands of Palenke*, for the successful cultivation of which it is superior to any other country in the world.

In the cultivation of any or all of these tropical products, with the cheap native labor of the country, are found profits almost beyond the conception of those not familiar with the possibilities of tropical soil and climate. It is claimed for these various products, that cacao will yield a net profit of \$400 per acre, the quality of the bean being equal to any in the world. In the cultivation of cacao it requires five years to bring the plantation to the point of profitable production. Two crops of superior

In this department of Palenke, blessed with an abundant, uniform and well-distributed rainfall, a rich virgin soil and an absolute freedom from frosts or drouth, are conditions insuring the successful cultivation of almost every tropical product known to commerce. Growing wild in the valley of the Rio Michol, can be found vanilla, cacao, tobacco, the rubber tree, zapote, pineapples and an unnumbered variety of tropical fruits, many of them as yet unknown to commerce, while in the fields of the native farmer are seen almost as countless a variety of grains and vegetables. Three crops of corn can be grown, on the same land, in a single year, and can be planted almost any day in the year. Vegetables of many varieties are products of almost continuous planting.

The soil is a deep rich loam, the accumulation of uncounted ages; underlying which is found a peculiar variety of soft limestone—the identical formation that is sought for by the expert coffee grower in Guatemala. This limestone



LANDSCAPE IN THE VALLEY OF THE MICHOI

tobacco can be raised from the same ground each year. This industry presents the advantage of bringing quick returns as the planter can market his first crop within six months from the opening up of his land. The two crops will bring the producer a profit of from \$200.00 to \$300.00 per acre. The planter will, however, be compelled to educate his labor as to the proper cultivation and curing of the leaf, the native methods of treatment being very crude and primitive. The fragrant vanilla is found growing wild in many localities of the department, often betraying its presence by its pleasing perfume. Although this product commands a high price —\$8.00 per pound—it is given but little attention. An acre cultivated with this valuable bean, it is said, will



CASCADES OF THE TULLJA (TOO-LEE-HAH)

yield a profit beyond that of almost any other known product common to the country. Rubber, although it requires more time to bring a plantation of trees into bearing, is one that is remarkably profitable and, after the first two years, is much less expensive in its cultivation than almost any other product. The trees, taken from their native home in the adjoining forest or transplanted from the nursery, are planted 400 to the acre. For the first two years they are cultivated by keeping the weeds thoroughly subdued, after which they require little attention. At the expiration of the seventh year, they are tapped for the first time, and will yield from one to two pounds to the tree; the product at present commanding fifty cents per pound; the yield representing a gross value of \$200.00 to \$400.00 per acre at its first harvest, increasing yearly thereafter, until at the age of fifteen years the trees will yield four to six pounds, representing an average value of *more* than ONE THOUSAND dollars per acre. The cultivation, harvesting and marketing will not cost to exceed seven or eight per cent of the market value of the product.

But of all these myriad fruits and products, when time and expense are considered, the one presenting the promise of greatest profit is certainly that of coffee. This product requires less time, from first planting, to bring profitable returns than does rubber; is not as delicate as cacao, and while not so prompt in first returns as tobacco, it is less expensive in its cultivation and does not demand the experience and skill that is required in the cultivation, care, and curing of that better known product for market.



ENTRANCE TO THE FOREST FROM THE GRASSLAND



ABOVE THE CASCADES ON THE TULJA



A TWO-YEAR-OLD COFFEE TREE

CHAPTER VII

COFFEE—BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION—HOME OF THE PLANT—FIRST UTILIZED—EXTENDED USE—INTRODUCTION INTO AMERICA—CULTIVATION IN MEXICO—IN PALENKE—COST AND PROFIT PER ACRE—MR. PEASE'S TABLE OF EXPENSE—ACCESSIBILITY OF COFFEE LANDS OF THE RIO MICHOL TO TRANSPORTATION.

THE botanical description of coffee as laid down in the text books is:

"The coffee shrub or tree is an evergreen plant, which, under natural conditions, grows to a height of 18 to 20 feet, with oblong-ovate, acuminate smooth and shining leaves, measuring about six inches in length by two and one half inches in width. Its flowers, which are produced in dense clusters in the axile of the leaves, have a five toothed calyx, a tubular five-parted corolla, five stamens, and a single bifid style. The flowers are pure white in color, with a rich fragrant odor, and the plants in blossom have a lovely and attractive appearance, but the bloom is very evanescent. The fruit is a fleshy berry, and being in appearance and size more like a cherry, which on ripening assumes a dark red color. Each of these berries, or cherries, contains two seeds embedded in a yellow pulp and these seeds are enclosed in a thin membranous endocarp (the parchment.) The seeds which constitute the raw coffee of commerce are plano-convex in form, the flat surfaces which are laid against each other within the berry having a longitudinal furrow or groove. They are of a soft, semi-transparent, bluish or greenish color, hard and tough in texture."



ON THE BANKS OF THE RIO MICHOI.

passengers and crew. In this dilemma misfortune threatened this first importation of the berry. But—and here the traditions differ somewhat—the thirsty officer heroically denied himself, his meagre allowance of water that he might nourish the tender shoot in his care; while the other tradition says that the priest—with more forethought—first drank the water and then gave the parched and shrivelling shrub the benefit of his tears. As adding to this tinge of romance it is claimed that all the coffees of the

Coffee is indigenous only to the soil of Africa, on which continent it is found growing in a wild state in widely separated localities. Its first cultivation as an economic food product is, however, traced to Abyssinia from where its use extended to Arabia, where it received its present name, and where it first gained commercial importance. Upon its first introduction into Arabia, about 1470, its use met, for a long time, the opposition of the Mahomedan priesthood, being looked upon as an intoxicating beverage and therefore prohibited by the Koran. However, like all things needful to man, it survived the anathemas of the church, until its use has finally extended over the civilized world.

While there are two traditions as to the introduction of coffee into the Americas, they each agree as to the year, 1720, as being the date. One of these traditions assigns its introduction to a French officer, another to a Dominican priest. In each tradition the importation of the delicate plant, it is said, was made in a ship that, on the voyage, fell short of water for its

of the new world sprang from this single shrub thus miraculously preserved by the heroic officer denying his thirst, or the pious tears of the holy padre, according to the reader's faith in the saving virtue of tears or water. Whatever the particular manner of its introduction may have been, whether by champion of "cross" or "sword," it is certain the plant soon spread, from the island home of its first introduction, to the mainland in Costa Rica, Guatemala and later to Mexico; finding in its last transplanting conditions of soil and temperature peculiarly suited to its perfect development.

Of all the countries in the world where the cultivation of coffee has been attempted, in none has it found in soil and climate a more congenial home than that of Chiapas, in Mexico. The superior quality of the Chiapas berry gives it a high rank among the very best varieties known to commerce, while the enormous yield of its trees is beyond that of any known coffee region on the globe.

CULTIVATION.

The methods of Mexican coffee cultivation are necessarily varied to suit the changed conditions of altitude, rainfall, and the richness or poverty of soil found throughout what is known as the "coffee zone" of the country. Because of these diverse conditions, found with each change of locality, it is impossible to give the details of any system of cultivation that will intelligently apply to the whole country.

Irrigation, to a greater or less extent, is resorted to throughout the Mexican zone, except in the states of Tabasco, southern Vera Cruz and portions of Oaxaca and Chiapas. In these last named



A TRAIL IN THE FOOTHILLS

localities the rainfall is abundant throughout the year, rendering artificial application of water wholly unnecessary at any time. Another changing feature of cultivation is that of a protecting shade given the trees of the plantation. In the larger portion of the country, this feature of shade is indispensable, while in the extreme high altitudes possible to coffee production, no shade whatever is required. Again, on lands of poor, thin soil as many as a thousand and even twelve hundred trees are planted to the acre, while in Chiapas the richness of the soil will not permit the planting of more than five hundred to the same area. This idea of planting the greater number of trees on the poorer soil, sounds paradoxical to the northern mind, nevertheless such is the custom. However, trees planted in such great numbers to the acre on lean land attain only a bush-like growth, and yield only one half to threequarters of a pound to the tree, a gross yield of 600 to 900 pounds to the acre; while in the rich soil of Chiapas with only 500 trees to the acre, the growth is more tree like, the yield being at full bearing, from four to eight pounds to the tree, or an average of from 2000 to 4000 pounds to the acre. In fact, there are well known small plantations yielding as high as 10 pounds to the tree, making the enormous harvest of FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS TO THE ACRE. More than this, there are trees in Chiapas that have been known to yield 40, 50 and even 60 pounds each and every year for many years. Of course, such trees are exceptional; nevertheless, they serve to show the possibilities of the industry and what might be accomplished with a more thorough system of cultivation than is practised at the present time.

In establishing a plantation in any of the northern departments of Chiapas, the undergrowth and all the smaller trees are cut down and left to dry for at least twenty days; the trees of larger growth being left standing as a protection to the coffee trees against both wind and sun. When sufficiently dry the fallen trees and undergrowth are burned. Immediately following the "burning" the ground is staked off into squares, measuring nine feet. After this, or as soon thereafter as the heavier rains of the season shall set in, the young shoots, eighteen to twenty-four months old, are set equidistant from each other in the manner indicated. Corn, as an attendant crop, may also be planted between the rows of trees as, for the first year or two, it is in no way detrimental; after the second year, however, the ground should be left to the tree alone. Following the planting mentioned the ground should be kept entirely free from weeds, and it is unnecessary to say that the more thorough this labor is performed the better it will be for the young plantation and attendant corn as well. To do justice to the plantation the weeds should be cleaned from it at least once each sixty days for the first two years, after that age, four annual cleanings will be sufficient. There will be a sprinkling of coffee the second year from the date of planting



TOWN OF HIDALGO



VIEW ON THE EL SALTO—SAN CRISTOBAL TRAIL

and on the third year will appear a profitable crop ; still the trees will not come into *full* bearing until five to six years of age, at which time a harvest of from four to eight pounds to the tree may be expected.

The cost of production is, of course, a matter governed by the cost of labor. In the department of Palenke, labor commands from eighteen to twenty-five cents per day, the laborer boarding himself; although the employer is supposed to furnish a house for each man and family. These houses, the usual thatched hut common to the country, cost only from six to eight dollars each.

The following table showing the cost of clearing TEN ACRES of land ; the purchase and planting of 5000 trees and the continued cultivation of the same for the period of three years, has been prepared for this publication by Mr. Thomas C. Pease, a successful American coffee planter and long-time resident of Mexico. Mr. Pease is a close observer, a practical planter, and his estimates of expense are exceedingly liberal and absolutely reliable as covering the maximum of necessary costs indicated.

The number of days labor set forth in the following table will be found ample for the thorough cultivation of the ground, and with such cultivation the ten acres will yield at the expiration of the three years a crop of not less than one pound to the

tree, or a gross harvest of 5000 pounds of coffee, worth in New York or Hamburg eighteen to twenty-four cents per pound, to which of either points it can be shipped from the plantation on the Rio Michol for two cents per pound.

Table of Expense for Clearing Ten Acres of Land—Purchase, Planting and Cultivation
of 5000 Trees for Three Years.

FIRST YEAR.

100 days' labor clearing land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$25 00	
60 days' labor collecting and burning brush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15 00	
20 days' labor marking and staking land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 00	
50 days' labor transplanting 5000 trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12 50	
10 days' labor trimming and adjusting trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 50	
Purchase of 5000 trees @ \$10.00 per thousand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50 00	
180 days' labor cultivation (one weeding each 60 days)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45 00	
Total of first year's expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		\$155 00

SECOND YEAR.

180 days' labor cultivation (one weeding each 60 days)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45 00	
Incidentals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12 50	
Total second year's expense	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		57 50

THIRD YEAR.

180 days' labor cultivation (one weeding each 60 days)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45 00	
Incidentals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 00	
Total cost third year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		52 00
Total cost of the improvements on a plantation of ten acres at the end of three years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		\$264 50



COCOANUT PALMS ON THE TULJA

The estimates of cost in the above table are based on American currency, as are all other valuations in this work unless otherwise expressly indicated.

Labor in this locality of PALENKE, as has been stated, is drawn wholly from the ten thousand native Indians inhabiting the department. These Indians are a mild, inoffensive people who, with proper training and a reasonable regard for their comfort and well being, make the best and most devoted of servants. Unlike the demoralized natives of the great cities of Mexico (whom the American tourist mistakenly assumes as representing the typical native Indian) these southern Indians are thoroughly honest and, with reasonable treatment, are faithful, willing and fairly industrious. The custom of the country calls the laborer to the field at sun up in the morning, keeping him there until the sun goes down at night. Through these long hours the Indian, with only his "machete," will accomplish more at such work as clearing land and "weeding," than will the more



MAHOGANY RAFT ON THE TULLIA

intelligent white man with more modern implements. All that is required to secure ample labor is a just treatment of the people; once assured that they will be dealt with honestly and they are devotion itself. To the credit of American planters in Mexico generally, and in the department of PALENKE particularly, it can be said that they have established for the "Americano" the reputation of being the most just and generous of all employers.

In the application of this cheap labor—eighteen cents to twenty five cents per day—to the production of so valuable a product as coffee, is found the possibilities of the enormous profits enjoyed by the planters of Mexico.

As indicating the marked advantage a more valuable commodity enjoys in its marketing over ordinary farm products, it may

here be stated that while it costs the value of one bushel of corn in Kansas or Nebraska to send another bushel to the Chicago market—one bag of coffee will pay the expense on TEN other bags from the plantation on the Rio Michol to New York, Hamburg or Havre. Or to put it differently : It will be found that the average western farmer, in order to pay the freight on his products, is compelled to work not less than *one half* of each and every year for the transportation companies that carry his produce to market, while the coffee planter contributes but *one tenth* of his time for the same purpose. The Palenke coffee grower instead of being at the mercy of railway freight pools, finds himself at the gates of the world's highway at Frontera, where pools, trusts and kindred combinations are unknown and where they will ever remain impossible, for no man, or combination of men, will ever be able to monopolize the highways of the open seas.



A CLEARING IN THE FOREST



VIEW IN THE VALLEY OF THE RIO MICHOI

it since the days of the conquest, when Cortez parceled it out among his followers. This partition of a plundered empire by the ruthless conqueror was made with a royal hand, the most obscure trooper being allotted in lands and people what in Europe

CHAPTER VIII

COLONIZATION—VAST SIZE OF MEXICAN PROPERTIES—DIFFICULTIES IN PURCHASE OF LAND—ADVANTAGES OF COLONIZATION—ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN COMPANIES—PALENKE COFFEE LAND COMPANY—THEIR METHODS OF SALE AND SETTLEMENT—LANDS ON THE RIO MICHOI—ACCESS TO MARKETS OF THE WORLD.

WHILE lack of information concerning the country is the *principal* cause preventing American emigration to Mexico, the difference in language and people, but most of all the impossibility of purchasing lands in reasonably small tracts, are hindrances met with that are almost as serious.

All desirable lands in the Republic have long been held under private ownership, much of it for generations; some of



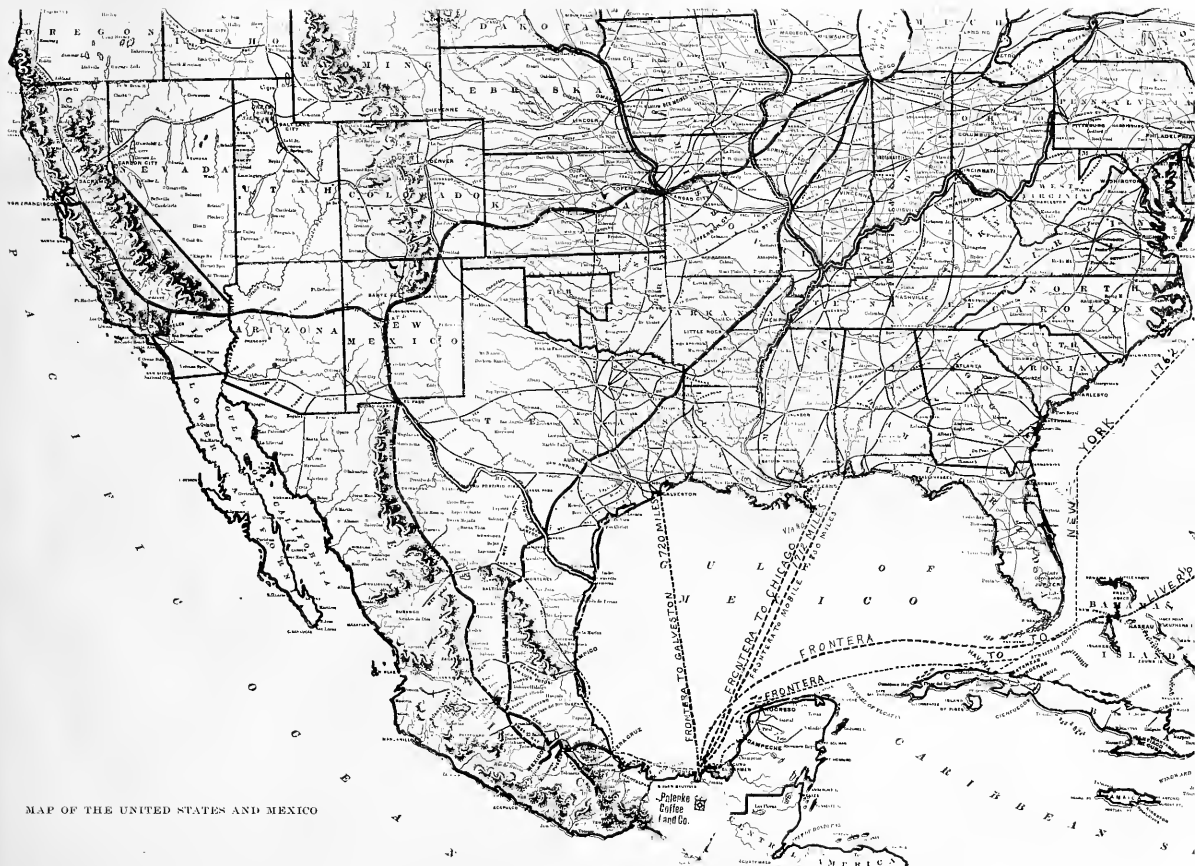
THE CAPITOL OF TABASCO, SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

country, colonization has been found the only satisfactory method to secure successful American settlement in Mexico. By this means the problem of the purchase of land is easily solved, the isolation following individual settlement is eliminated and moreover the colonist secures to his children the benefits to be derived from good schools and to himself the advantages of those social features to which Americans are accustomed and which are only to be realized in the modern American town.

In the department of Palenke, there are already established a number of French, German and American planters, all of whom are enthusiastic as to the future of the country, declaring it superior in climate, health and production to any part of the great Republic. The unqualified success of these pioneer coffee planters of Palenke has attracted universal attention to that part

would have constituted a principality. This vicious precedent of vast estates, thus established, has strangely survived all the innovations that have followed in the wake of changing governments and constitutions of the country, and will doubtless continue until broken down by the coming land tax of the future. When considering that these Mexican properties are seldom less than from ten thousand to one hundred thousand acres in extent, and that however willing or anxious the owner may be to sell the *whole* of his estate, he will seldom or never part with less than the entire property; the impossibility of acquiring title to small tracts of land becomes plainly apparent. Every American land seeker visiting Mexico is sure to meet these discouraging conditions of vast estates where, to buy a farm, he finds he must buy the equivalent of a county. Considered either separately or collectively, the above hinderances are serious matters to the single individual contemplating settlement in Mexico.

To meet the difficulties mentioned in the purchase of land and the almost equal objection of isolation that necessarily follows individual location in a foreign



MAP OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO



AMERICAN CONSULATE, FRONTERA



PORT OF FRONTERA

of the state of Chiapas; an interest that during the past year has resulted in the sale of several large blocks of land to different American companies. These several companies are now engaged in efforts at colonizing their various properties, with present indications that the department of Palenke in Chiapas will soon contain the most important

American settlement in Mexico.

Among the various plans adopted by these different companies for securing settlement, the one found most popular and satisfactory is that of the PALENKE COFFEE LAND COMPANY. This active and enterprising corporation is selling its lands in small tracts, or in such quantities as may be desired, accepting one-fourth of the purchase price down, the balance being due in monthly installments, if so desired. Added to this feature is the opportunity given the non-resident owner to *improve* his property upon the same plan of monthly payments. Acting in concert with this American land company, it has been

found that organizations for the purpose of the improvement of lands, are easily effected. These *local* organizations possess the commendable feature of enabling their various members to choose their own agents, for selection and improvement of their separate properties; the expense of such improvement being met by semi-annual, quarterly or monthly payments, as may best suit the convenience of the individual owner. In this manner properties can be satisfactorily improved, leaving the proprietor to visit his plantation at his pleasure. Under this system any man, by setting aside a reasonable amount each month, for the period of two and a half to three years, can easily secure for himself a comfortable and satisfactory income.

For verification of these claims that two, three, four and five hundred dollars per acre can be realized in coffee planting, the reader is referred to the official reports of the Governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico, and to the official reports, as well, of our own Consuls representing the United States in these countries. If reliance can be placed upon these official reports, or if the statements of American planters engaged in the industry in Mexico are to be credited, then these assumed profits are real and the claims made for the country are correct and legitimate.

STATES OF CHIAPAS AND TABASCO

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
MILES



As has before been stated the most desirable locality in the department of Palenke, when health, climate, products and accessibility to markets are considered, is the beautiful country of the Rio Michol. This locality, easily accessible to the navigable waters of the Tulija, is only 130 miles from the Gulf port of Frontera, and about the same distance from San Juan Bautista, the state capital of Tabasco, and the present commercial distributing point and central market for all of the northern part of the state of Chiapas. The port of Frontera, however, is the port of entry and is destined to become the future city of all that part of the gulf coast. Via New Orleans, Frontera is distant from Chicago only 1712 miles, and as shown by the time table of the New York and Cuban Mail ("Ward Line") Steamship Company, lies within 1762 miles of New York City.

By reference to any good map it will be seen that these enormously rich lands of Chiapas are *hundreds* of miles nearer the great market of Chicago, than are the orchards of California or the wheat lands and stock farms of Oregon and Washington, and are more than *a thousand miles* nearer the still greater market of New York City than is any part of the Pacific states named. More than this: the products of the mountain and Pacific states can only reach their final market after a long and expensive haul by transcontinental rail; while the coffee lands of Palenke, particularly those in the valley of the Rio Michol, are practically accessible by water to all the markets of the great cities of our eastern seaboard and to Europe and the world at large. These facts are well worth serious consideration when measuring the relative merits of location and land values.

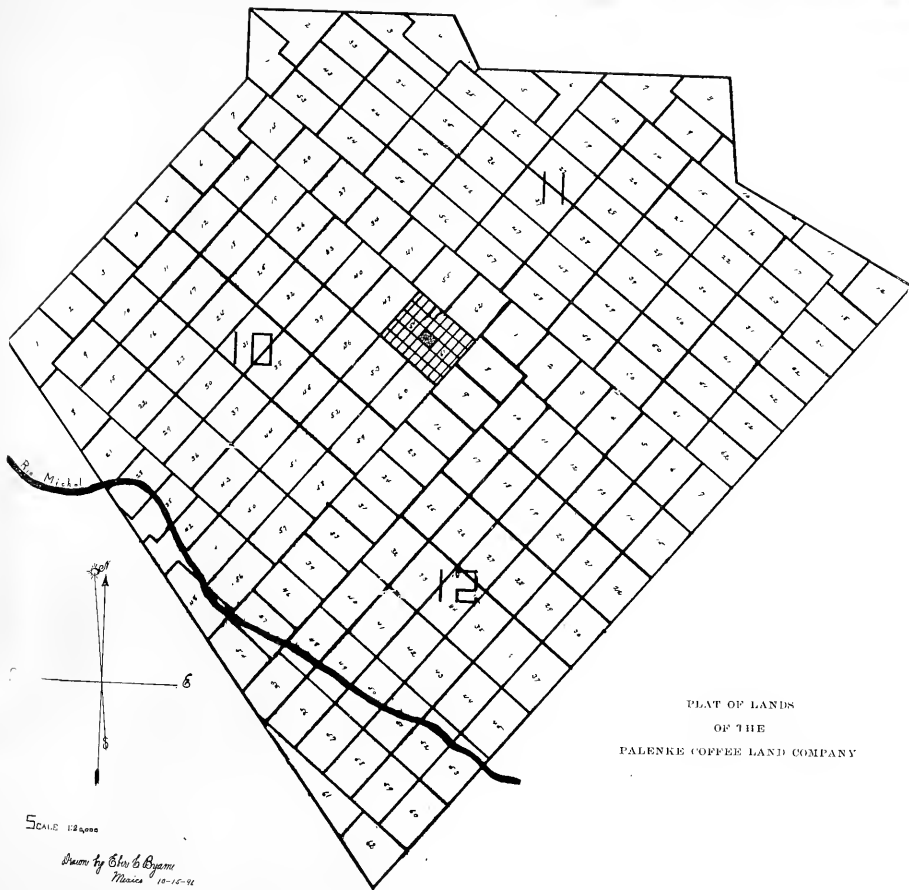
As a fair measure of the *actual* and *relative* values of these Chiapas properties it will be found both interesting and instructive to compare their annual profits of hundreds of dollars per acre with the wheat and corn lands of the states in the Mississippi valley, where returns of \$5.00 to \$8.00 per acre are considered *very* satisfactory. And yet these corn lands and wheat farms sell from \$50.00 to \$100.00 per acre while the far richer lands of Chiapas, though *many times* more profitable, are to be had for less than *one tenth* the price asked for the far less fertile northern properties.

No man familiar with the problem of advancing land values throughout the civilized world, but will promptly agree that in a very few years these selections from the best of Chiapas' richest lands will command many times their present value.

The man of middle age in the United States has fairly witnessed the beginning and end of the settlement of the states west of the Mississippi river. This settlement has been sufficiently complete, at least, to close all lesser avenues of money making, save only to those of ample capital; a result that leaves the average man a "hewer of wood and drawer



MAIN STREET IN FRONTERA



SCALE 1:25,000

Drawn by E. L. & B. G. Byrne
Mexico 10-16-94

of water," with little hope of improving his condition. However, with the opening up of these southern countries, with their untold wealth and possibilities, to American settlement, has come again the chance of a life time for the man of spirit and enterprise who, by seizing the opportunity thus presented, will find it possible to secure for the future that sought for boon—a comfortable income independent of daily toil.

It is said that :

“The GENII OPPORTUNITY knocks once at each man’s door,
But if unheeded, hurrying on, returns to knock NO MORE.”

THE FOLLOWING TABLE OF DISTANCES

From Frontera to Chicago and New York, as compared with various cities in the United States, is added as data of possible interest.

	TO CHICAGO.	TO NEW YORK.		TO CHICAGO.	TO NEW YORK.
Seattle, Washington - - -	2233 miles	3145 miles	Butte, Montana - - -		2572 miles
Tacoma, Washington - - -	2322 “	3234 “	Bismarck, North Dakota - - -		1766 “
Spokane, Washington - - -	1881 “	2793 “	Denver, Colorado - - -		1974 “
Portland, Oregon - - -	2314 “	3226 “	Cheyenne, Wyoming - - -		1921 “
San Francisco, California - -	2357 “	3269 “	Santa Fe, New Mexico - - -		2203 “
Boise, Idaho - - -	1830 “	2742 “	Phoenix, Arizona - - -		2493 “
Los Angeles, California - - -	2265 “	3177 “	Ogden, Utah - - -		2436 “
San Diego, California - - -	2343 “	3255 “	Salt Lake, Utah - - -		2473 “
Carson City, Nevada - - -	2162 “	3074 “	Austin, Texas - - -		1898 “
Helena, Montana - - -		2352 “	FRONTERA, MEXICO - - -	1712 miles	1762 miles

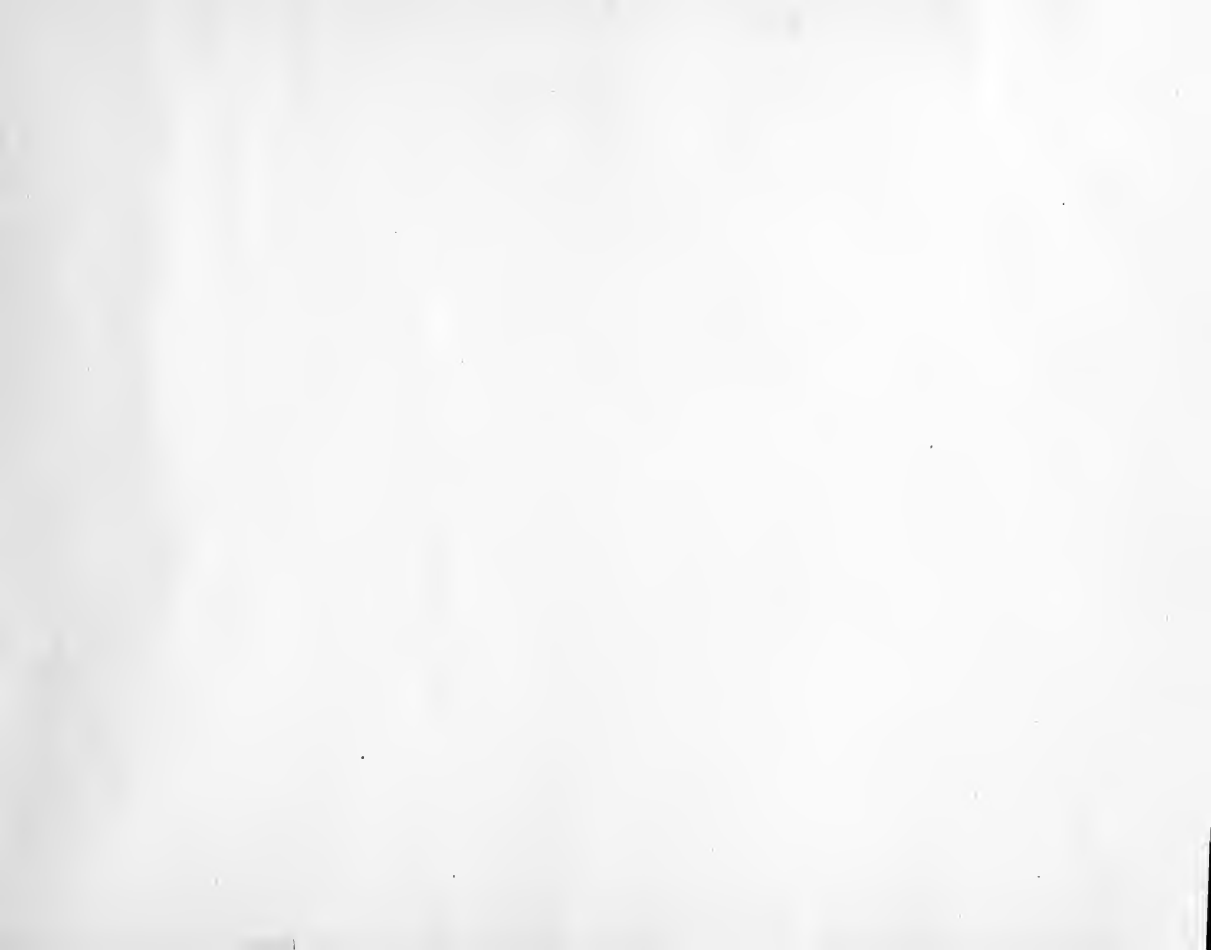
As shown by the foregoing the distance from Frontera to New York is but little more than ONE HALF the distance from New York to the Pacific cities named.

The above table can easily be verified by consulting the time tables of the various railway and steamship lines from which it has been compiled, viz., Great Northern; Northern Pacific; Union Pacific; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe; Southern Pacific; Queen & Crescent; Illinois Central; Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul; Chicago and Northwestern; Michigan Central; Pennsylvania R. R.; New York and Cuban Mail Steamship Company.













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